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ABSTRACT

This volume discusses "Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999, the proposed reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was established in 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" program. The proposed 1999 Act builds upon the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA titled "Improving America's Schools Act" and the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act." The four guiding principles for ESEA in 1999 are: (1) high standards in every classroom; (2) improving teacher and principal quality; (3) strengthening accountability; and (4) ensuring that all children can learn in environments that are safe, disciplined and drug-free and where their parents feel welcome and involved. The discussion of each of the 11 Titles in the proposed legislation includes a summary of: "What's New"; "What We've Learned"; and "What We Propose." In the Act are the following: Title I--Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards (covering basic grants, comprehensive school reform, Even Start Family Literacy, education of migratory children, neglected or deliquent children and youth, reading excellence); Title II--High Standards in the Classroom (covering teaching to high standards, transition to teaching--troops to teachers, early childhood educator professional development, and technical assistance); Title III--Technology for Education; Title IV--Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act; Title V--Equity, Excellence, and Public School Choice (covering magnet schools, public charter schools, OPTIONS--Opportunities to Improve Our Nation's Schools, and the Women's Educational Equity Act); Title VI--Class-Size Reduction; Title VII--The Bilingual Education Act; Title VIII--Impact Aid; Title IX--Indian, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Education; Title X--Programs of National Significance (covering the Fund for the Improvement of Education, gifted and talented students, international education, arts in education, inexpensive book distribution, civic education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, elementary school foreign language assistance, and the National Writing Project); and Title XI--General, Provisions, Definitions, and Accountability. A discussion of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act--Education for Homeless Children and Youth concludes the volume. (Contains 209 references.) (RJM/AA)

Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999

An Overview of the Clinton Administration's Proposal to Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

THE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR ALL CHILDREN ACT OF 1999

The Clinton Administration's Proposal to Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

"We know from hard experience that unequal education hardens into unequal prospects. We know the Information Age will accelerate this trend...

"We cannot allow this age of opportunity to be remembered also for the opportunities that were missed. Every day, we wake up and know that we have a challenge; now we must decide how to meet it."

President William J. Clinton
June 5, 1998

Commencement Remarks
The Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR ALL CHILDREN ACT OF 1999

Established in 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) opened a new era of federal support for education, particularly for students who would gain the most from it: children in our high-poverty communities and at risk of educational failure.

Today, the ESEA authorizes the federal government's single largest investment in elementary and secondary education. Through the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999, the President and Congress will reaffirm and strengthen the federal government's role in promoting academic excellence and equal educational opportunity for every American child.

This reauthorization of ESEA comes at a critical time for the United States. At the turn of the century and the dawn of the Information Age, our country is the most productive in the world, yet we do not provide all of our children with an education equal to the best in the world. Students are making progress overall in improving achievement in both reading and math. However, on international comparisons of student achievement in mathematics and science, American students in the early grades score well relative to their peers in other nations, but by the end of high school they rank near the bottom. As technology continues to advance and global competition continues to increase in the years ahead, such disparities in educational performance will be an increasingly serious threat to the economic well-being of individual American citizens and of the nation as a whole.

The children in our poorest communities are at greatest risk of being left behind in an economy driven by expanded information, increased knowledge, and higher skills. Gaps in student achievement — between high-poverty and low-poverty students and between minority students and their peers — have persisted and in some cases widened in recent years. Overcrowded classes, crumbling school buildings, and unqualified teachers are all too common in high-poverty schools, where, paradoxically, students have the most pressing educational needs.

Through the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA — titled the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) — and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Congress and the Clinton Administration took a number of historic steps toward addressing these concerns and preparing all of America's students to meet high academic standards. With federal leadership and support, 48 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia have now completed the development of state content standards for all children, and the other two states have promoted challenging standards at the local level. In supporting the development of the same challenging standards for all children in all public schools, the reforms advanced by the IASA and Goals 2000 fundamentally transformed the Federal

role in education, which had for too long accepted lower expectations for low-income students in high-poverty schools.

While many states and districts are still in the early stages of implementing high standards, there is a growing body of evidence that sustained standards-based reform is a powerful vehicle for improving student achievement. Recent research has shown, for example, that classroom instruction linked to high standards can produce significant gains in student performance in both reading and mathematics.[1, 2]

The goal of the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 is to continue and build upon this progress by supporting the efforts of states, school districts, and individual schools to make high standards a reality in American classrooms. Toward that end, the Act will support flexibility for states and schools to allow them to implement programs in ways that meet their particular needs and promote local innovation. It will also hold states, districts, and schools accountable for the quality of the education they provide and for student performance. Specifically, the Educational Excellence Act will:

- Make a firm commitment to high standards in every classroom;
- Improve teacher and principal quality to ensure high-quality instruction for all children;
- Strengthen flexibility coupled with accountability for results; and
- Ensure safe, healthy, disciplined, and drug-free school environments where all children feel connected, motivated, and challenged to learn, and where parents are welcomed and involved.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE 1994 REFORMS

In 1994, the IASA and the Goals 2000 Act established the clear expectation that all children can and should reach high standards. Five principles guided the 1994 reforms:

(1) High standards for all children, with aligned educational elements such as curricula and assessments working as a coherent system to help all students reach those standards;
(2) A focus on teaching and learning;
(3) Flexibility to stimulate local school and district initiatives, coupled with responsibility for student performance;
(4) Stronger links among schools, parents, and communities; and
(5) Resources targeted to where needs are greatest and in amounts sufficient to make a difference.

The two laws were built around the standards-based approach to reform: using federal resources to encourage and assist states in developing and implementing challenging state standards for all children and in using those standards to improve learning through a coherent and aligned system of curricula and assessments.

The 1994 laws complemented and helped to accelerate reforms in states and school districts. School districts in states that had begun standards-based reforms early — such as Kentucky, Maryland, and Oregon — found new federal support to help them use challenging standards to improve teaching and learning.[3] In states and districts where standards are used as a tool for classroom instruction, student achievement has shown significant gains in both reading and math.[4, 5]

For states that had not yet begun standards-based reform, the 1994 laws were a catalyst to change curriculum, teaching practices, and assessments to support more rigorous and challenging instruction. According to the General Accounting Office (GAO), state officials believe that Goals 2000 is helping states meet their own education reform goals.[6]

Goals 2000 and the ESEA are spurring standards-based reform in local schools and communities. More than 80 percent of poor school districts, and almost half of all districts nationwide, reported that Title I is "driving standards-based reform in the district as a whole."[7] The GAO recently found that states report that Goals 2000 has also been a significant factor in promoting their education reform efforts.[8] In part because of these laws, standards-based reform is taking hold nationwide.

It is clear that where states continue work on standards-based reform over a period of time, students have benefited. This evidence provides a compelling case for the federal government's continued support for state standards-based reforms coupled with strengthened accountability.

- *Education Week* recently reported that states which have built reforms around standards and assessments — including Colorado and Connecticut — were the only states to post statistically significant gains over their NAEP reading scores in both 1992 and 1994.[9]

- North Carolina and Texas made greater gains in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than any other state between 1992 and 1996 and Texas has shown significant signs of closing the achievement gap between white students and Hispanic and black students. A recent study by Rand researchers concluded that the most plausible explanation for gains in test scores in these states are their aligned systems of standards, curriculum, and assessments, and their efforts to hold schools accountable for the improvement of all students.[10]

- Three-year trends reported by states and districts show progress in the percentage of students in the highest-poverty schools meeting state standards for proficiency in mathematics and reading.[11]

The 1994 laws significantly expanded the flexibility of states and school districts to implement locally developed and driven education reforms.[12] Increased flexibility in 1994, for example, has allowed states to submit a single, consolidated application — instead of separate applications — for the majority of ESEA programs, helping reduce paperwork by 85 percent while encouraging a comprehensive approach to planning. The 1994 laws also allow the Education Department to

waive statutory and regulatory requirements that block innovative reform upon the request of states, districts, and schools. The Department of Education received 648 requests for waivers, roughly 85 percent of which were either approved or withdrawn because applicants learned they had sufficient flexibility under the law to proceed without a waiver.[13]

Both the IASA and Goals 2000 also recognized the integral role that families and communities play in helping all students achieve to high standards by encouraging increased parental involvement. Today, those partnerships are continuing to grow, not only through state-level leadership, but also through grassroots efforts to coordinate community resources and support efforts to improve our schools. The increased momentum behind charter schools signals new thinking, organization, and instructional approaches. Similarly, new partnerships for after-school learning, innovative professional development opportunities, and new ways of using technology are expanding traditional notions of schooling. The vision of good schools is fast becoming a vision of community schools, a vision that extends beyond the school walls and into virtual communities and engaging learning environments.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ESEA 1999

As the U.S Department of Education began work on the 1999 reauthorization, we examined the effectiveness of our efforts over the past five years by reviewing progress on the performance indicators developed under the Government Progress and Results Act; analyzing congressionally mandated evaluations of Title I and other federal education programs resulting from the 1994 laws; and conducting nationwide conversations — built around the 1994 themes — with hundreds of teachers, principals, parents, community activists, state and local policymakers, researchers, and other education experts.

Through these discussions, a clear focus emerged on promoting academic equity and excellence through four principals: (1) high standards in every classroom, (2) improving teacher and principal quality, (3) strengthening accountability, and (4) ensuring that all children can learn in environments that are safe, disciplined and drug-free and where their parents feel welcome and involved.

High Standards in Every Classroom

States have made substantial progress in developing state content standards. However, standards-based reform is a tremendous challenge that requires a continued commitment of substantial time, effort, and resources. Much work remains to be done.

For example, only 21 states and Puerto Rico have developed student performance standards — that spell out what children should be able to do — in at least mathematics and reading or language arts. Only six states have policies that link or align teacher professional development with State content standards, although 11 States are developing such policies.[14] And according to a 1997 review of state plans, only 4 states provided evidence that their standards were benchmarked against the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) or other external assessments.[15]

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999, our proposal to reauthorize the ESEA, continues support for state efforts to help all children reach high academic standards. It would:

- Raise student performance through rigorous academic standards. Our proposal would retain the current Title I requirement that states establish content standards, student performance standards, and assessments aligned to high academic standards by the 2000-01 school year. Under the Teaching to High Standards initiative in Title II, states would receive a set-aside to continue the development and implementation of standards with a specific focus on bringing standards into the classroom through improved professional development. The initiative would also help states and districts align instruction, curriculum, assessments, and professional development to challenging academic standards.

- Implement standards in the classroom by:

  — Helping states use standards to improve classroom learning. Only 36 percent of teachers feel "very well prepared" to teach to high standards.[16] Our Teaching to High Standards initiative would help give teachers the tools and training they need to help students reach high standards.

  — Strengthening the teaching of reading and continue efforts to reduce class size. Our proposal would help implement the recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences' study, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children,* by:
    1. Continuing the Class-Size Reduction initiative — which seeks to reduce the national average class size to 18 students per regular classroom in the first through third grades — to give all students the individual attention they need to learn to read well and independently by the end of the third grade.
    2. Focusing on professional development, extended learning time, and family literacy through the Reading Excellence Act.
    3. Helping children start school ready to learn by increasing the intensity and quality of family literacy services provided under the Even Start Family Literacy program. It would also provide grants for professional development for early childhood educators to help young children develop critical language and literacy skills through new grants.

- Make math and science a must. The ESEA would continue to have a special emphasis on improving mathematics and science instruction by dedicating the first $300 million of the Teaching to High Standards grants under Title II to be spent on improving professional development opportunities for teachers of mathematics and science. The poor performance of U.S. students on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the evidence that high student achievement depends greatly on high-quality teaching make it imperative to continue this special emphasis.

Our ESEA proposal also calls for the reauthorization of the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education and the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Education Consortia. The Clearinghouse helps improve access to K-12 mathematics and science resources for teachers, students, parents, and other interested parties. The 10 consortia offer information and technical assistance to help states and school districts improve math and science programs.

- Implement continuous improvement and accountability based on challenging standards. States would hold all school districts accountable and school districts would hold schools accountable for continuous and substantial progress in increasing the percentage of students meeting State performance standards, with particular attention to improving the performance of traditionally low-achieving students.

- Support technology as a tool to help raise achievement levels in every classroom. The Technology for Education initiative in Title III would (1) help prepare new teachers to actively engage students in learning challenging content; (2) support high-poverty school districts' efforts to help teachers use technology — including simulations, "hands-on modeling," and exploration in virtual environments — to better teach students to challenging state standards; (3) use such tools as distance learning and web-based instruction to bring challenging subject matter into all classrooms; and (4) provide national leadership by encouraging innovative technology applications and disseminating information about them.

- Help educators receive high-quality technical assistance focused on implementing challenging standards. States and districts need tools and resources to help all schools ensure that their students are meeting challenging state standards. Throughout the bill, our ESEA proposal would provide support for technical assistance, with a concentrated effort in Title II to support a comprehensive, market-driven system of technical assistance and information dissemination. Such a system would be responsive to the demands of customers, encourage local leveraging of resources, and identify high-quality support. It also establishes an interactive, technology-based network of federal, state, and local information and resources to promote promising instructional strategies and improve teaching and learning.

- Provide high-quality services to students with limited English proficiency (LEP) to help them master challenging standards and learn English. Under both Titles I and VII, teachers would be given professional development opportunities to better serve LEP students. School districts and schools would also be held accountable for ensuring that all LEP students make progress toward mastering challenging standards and developing English proficiency.

- Promote equity, excellence, and public school choice options for all students. No one school or program can meet the unique needs of every student. Public school choice provides students with the flexibility to choose among public schools and programs that differ with respect to educational settings, pedagogy, and academic emphasis. Title V would support programs that can enhance options for students and parents,

including the Magnet Schools Program, the Public Charter Schools Program, and a new authority that would fund innovative options for public school choice.

- Provide students with opportunities for extended learning time. Extended learning time programs can improve student achievement when they are coordinated with challenging curricula and thoughtful instruction.[17] Our proposal would continue the Administration's strong commitment to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which provides grants to public schools to offer extended learning time opportunities for students and community members. Title I would also encourage the use of extended time.

Improved Teacher and Principal Quality

Qualified teachers are the most critical in-school factor in improving student achievement.[18] We know that recruiting high-quality teachers, providing teachers with support in their first three years, and ensuring that teachers receive ongoing high-quality professional development leads to improvements in the quality of teachers and their ability to engage students, manage classrooms, and teach challenging content. We also know that when teachers receive support from strong principals, the school learning environment is more likely to lead to increased student achievement.[19]

Yet too many teachers still do not receive ongoing high-quality professional development to help them improve and build on their teaching skills, many teachers leave the profession in their first three years, and far too many teachers are teaching in a field in which they have not been trained. Students in high-poverty schools are more likely than others to be taught some part of the day by teacher aides with limited education and training[20] and they are more likely to be taught by a teacher teaching out of field.[21] We must redouble our efforts to ensure that all children in America have a talented, dedicated, and well-prepared teacher to help them reach high standards.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 will take several important steps to ensure that all children are taught by highly qualified teachers. It would:

- Help teachers teach to high standards. The new Teaching to High Standards initiative, Title II – Part A, would help educators apply high standards to improve learning in American classrooms, in part by supporting new teachers during their first three years in the classroom and ensuring that all teachers are proficient in academic knowledge and teaching skills. Because of the particular importance of teacher training opportunities in mathematics and science, Teaching to High Standards grants would focus first on improving professional development in those disciplines.

- Support a national effort to recruit talented individuals to become principals and support their professional development to become effective instructional leaders. The Teaching to High standards initiative would authorize support for new and continuing principal development and leadership.

- Recruit and retain high-quality teachers. In recognition of national need to recruit 2.2 million teachers over the next decade, the Teaching to High Standards initiative and the new Transition to Teaching proposal under Title II would fund projects to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and principals in high-need areas.

  Our Transition to Teaching proposal would continue and expand upon the successful Troops to Teachers initiative by recruiting and supporting mid-career professionals as teachers, particularly in high-poverty school districts and high-need subject areas.

- Renew our commitment to ensure high-quality teachers in our highest-poverty schools. Our proposal would require that all new teachers, paid through Title I funds or in Title I schools operating a schoolwide program, be fully certified and that all newly hired secondary school teachers be certified in the subject in which they teach. By July 1, 2002, our proposal would also limit teacher aides without at least two years of college to non-instructional duties and aides with two or more years of college to instructional support and tutoring under the supervision of a certified teacher. Finally, our proposal would help create a stimulating, career-long learning environment for teachers by requiring school districts to set aside 5 percent of Title I funds for teacher professional development in the first two years and 10 percent thereafter.

- End the practice of hiring emergency certified teachers and asking teachers to teach classes out of their subject expertise. Our proposal would help ensure that classroom teachers are qualified by requiring new teachers to demonstrate both subject-matter knowledge and teaching expertise as part of the state certification process. It would also require states to ensure that, within four years, at least 95 percent of their teachers are: (1) fully certified; (2) working toward full certification through an alternative route that will lead them to full certification within three years; or (3) are fully certified in another state and working toward meeting state-specific requirements. Finally, it would require states to ensure that at least 95 percent of secondary school teachers have academic training or demonstrated competence in the subject area in which they teach.

- Provide support for teachers to effectively use advanced technology in their classrooms. While access to hardware, software, and connectivity has increased dramatically over the last few years, considerable work needs to be done to ensure that technology is used effectively to teach to high standards. Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology supports consortia of public and private entities to train new teachers to use technology to create engaging learning environments that prepare all students to achieve to challenging state and local standards. The proposal will also strengthen the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund's role in supporting high-quality professional development.

- Help ensure that all teachers are well trained to teach students with limited English proficiency (LEP) through teacher education programs for new and prospective teachers and through professional development for current teachers.

Strengthened Accountability for School and Student Performance

Title XI of our ESEA proposal is the Education Accountability Act: A package of accountability measures to hold schools, districts, teachers, and students to high standards and ensure that school districts and states provide students with a high-quality education. These accountability measures would apply to all states and districts that receive ESEA funding.

The 1994 laws and the recently passed Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 gave states and districts increased flexibility to coordinate, modify, and combine program activities in exchange for greater accountability for their schools' and students' performance. States, districts, and schools have begun to take advantage of the increased flexibility in the legislation in their efforts to create learning environments that help all students reach challenging academic standards. Eighty-four percent of districts said that even if they were given still greater flexibility to administer the federal programs, they would not change the services they provide.[22] However, effective accountability mechanisms are still incomplete — or do not even exist —in many programs.

The Education Accountability Act will strengthen and expand existing accountability provisions. It would:

- Support states in developing one rigorous accountability system for all districts and all schools. Our proposal would encourage states to develop one rigorous accountability system that holds all schools, including Title I schools, accountable for making continuous and substantial gains in student performance. States will have the flexibility to use either a model outlined in the statute or an alternative that is at least as rigorous and effective. States without a single statewide accountability system would be required to develop one for their Title I schools.

- Provide states and districts with additional resources to turn around low-performing schools. Our proposal would require states to continue to publicly identify and provide assistance to the lowest-performing districts, and require districts to continue to identify and provide assistance to the lowest-performing schools that have not improved over the previous three years.

  If there is no satisfactory improvement in student performance within two years, districts would be required to implement strong corrective actions that dramatically alter the structure of schools and the instructional strategies to help students in the school or school district.

- Update the recently enacted Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999, which permits states to waive selected requirements of ESEA programs. To ensure that

expanded flexibility is accompanied by strong accountability, states would be required to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act in ESEA and the Title I requirements regarding content and performance standards, assessments, and accountability.

- Increase accountability to parents and the public through school report cards. As a condition of receiving ESEA funds, our proposal would require states and school districts to produce and distribute annual report cards for each school, school district, and state. The report cards will include information on student achievement, teacher qualifications, class size, school safety, attendance, graduation rates, and academic performance by demographic group.

- Assist all students in meeting challenging state standards. Our proposal would hold states and school districts accountable for helping all students progress through high school and graduate having mastered the challenging material needed for them to meet high standards. States will be required to put policies in place that require school districts to (1) implement research-based prevention and early intervention strategies to identify and support students who might need additional help meeting challenging standards; (2) provide all students with qualified teachers who use proven instructional practices tied to challenging state standards; and, (3) provide continuing, intensive and comprehensive educational interventions to students who are not meeting standards on a timely basis.

- Develop first-rate student progress and promotion policies to end the practices of social promotion and grade retention. With such educational supports as small class sizes and quality teachers in place to help students meet high standards, our proposal would require states to implement policies to end practices of social promotion and traditional grade retention within four years. States would hold school districts accountable for ensuring that all students meet challenging standards at key transition points or graduating from high school. States would define key transition points (e.g., fourth grade and eighth grade), but would be required to include high school graduation as one of the transition points. States would be held accountable for ensuring that assessments used for purposes of promotion are aligned with the state's standards; use multiple measures, including teacher evaluations; offer multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate that they can meet the standards; are valid and reliable for the purposes for which they are being used; and provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

Support Safe, Healthy, and Disciplined Learning Environments

To advance learning, schools must create supportive environments that encourage positive personal growth and academic development. The Annual Report on School Safety 1998 concluded that schools nationally are generally safe places and that students in school today are not significantly more likely to be victimized than in previous years. However, recent tragic incidents of school violence throughout the country suggest that much remains to be done to ensure that every child is provided with a safe, healthy, and disciplined learning environment.

Many students are feeling less connected to other people and less motivated to learn. High schools, particularly in urban and suburban areas, are increasingly larger places where students feel increasingly alienated from adults and their peers. Research shows that when students feel connected to school and to their parents, they are less likely than other adolescents to suffer from emotional distress, have suicidal thoughts and behaviors, use violence, and smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or smoke marijuana.[23]

Finally, more and more children are leading unhealthy lifestyles — exercising less, growing increasingly overweight, and setting the stage for a lifetime of poor physical fitness and nutrition habits. Obesity, inactivity, and poor health habits cost billions of dollars and take hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Strengthen the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act by emphasizing high-quality research-based programs; targeting funds to communities experiencing high levels of violence, drug use, or both; helping districts respond to violent crises through School Emergency Response to Violence; and promoting safety by requiring a mental health assessment of any student who brings a gun to school.

- Expand comprehensive prevention efforts. Our proposal would continue to support the Safe Schools/ Healthy Students initiative through program activities sponsored by the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act. Comprehensive programs that address the complex needs of students are more likely to result in the creation of safe, disciplined, and drug-free learning environments.

- Permit local school districts to use a portion of ESEA funds to support coordinated services. Local school districts may use up to 5 percent of the ESEA funds they receive to provide elementary and secondary school students and their families with better access to the social, health, and education services necessary for students to succeed in school.

- Include a proposal to reform America's high schools. There are far too many high schools where students are nameless and faceless to adults — one student among many being shuffled through a large institution that is trying to provide the basics, but

unable to go beyond. This new initiative would provide resources to help transform 5,000 high schools into places where students receive individualized attention, are motivated to learn through alternative teaching approaches, and receive information to help them reach their long-term goals. Our proposal would encourage effective practices such as smaller schools, schools within schools, Advanced Placement courses, and mentoring and counseling services for students as they make the transition from high school to careers or postsecondary education.

- Require every school district and school to have sound discipline policies. Our proposal would require states to hold school districts and schools accountable for having discipline policies that focus on prevention, are consistent and fair, and are developed with the participation of the school community. States would also be required to ensure that schools have a plan to help students who are expelled or suspended continue to meet the challenging state standards.

- Promote physical fitness and lifelong healthy habits through demonstration projects. Exemplary physical education programs can promote life long healthy habits, provide opportunities for students to connect to school, and become an important component of after-school programs.[24]

CONCLUSION

In 1994, Congress and the President worked together to raise standards for all children and to provide a quality education for them to achieve those standards. We would no longer tolerate lower expectations and watered-down curriculum for poor and disadvantaged students.

Five years later, there is evidence that the new federal support for standards-based reform accelerated improvements already underway in many states, while helping spark reforms in others. Student achievement has risen, particularly in states at the forefront of standards-based reform.

This year, we must build upon the accomplishments of 1994. We must take the next step by helping schools and teachers bring high standards into every classroom and help every child achieve; improving the quality of our teachers and principals; strengthening accountability systems for student performance, and ensuring that all schools are safe, healthy, and drug-free.

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AMERICA'S EDUCATION GOALS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Reaffirms the importance of national goals, which provide a vision of excellence and a clear national focus for local and state efforts;
- Renames the National Education Goals as "America's Education Goals" in recognition of their importance across all levels of American education; and
- Reauthorizes America's Education Goals Panel to continue to report on progress toward meeting the goals.

In 1990, the state governors adopted the National Education Goals to set the nation's highest education priorities. In 1994, Congress established these goals in statute to provide a common agenda for the federal, state, and local governments to work together to help our children become responsible citizens, prepare for further learning, and meet the technological, scientific, and economic challenges of the 21st century.

What We've Learned

America's eight Education Goals are an ambitious effort to set high expectations for educational performance from preschool through adulthood in the areas of preparation for school, school completion, school achievement and citizenship, teacher education and professional development, mathematics and science, and adult literacy and lifelong learning.

Since the goals were adopted in 1990, our nation has made progress toward many of the goals but much remains to be done. The National Education Goals Panel's 1998 report, *Building a Nation of Learners*, highlights the areas where improvement has been made and where gaps still exist.[1]

At the national level, there has been an increase in the percentage of preschool children whose parents read to them or tell them stories — important activities to help children build cognitive skills and enter school ready to learn. There has also been an increase in the percentage of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders who meet the Goals Panel's performance standards in mathematics and in the percentage of all college degrees awarded that are in mathematics and science. Progress toward ensuring that every U.S. school is free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol has been mixed. While the percentage of students who report that they have been threatened or injured in school has decreased, student disruptions and drug use in school have increased. In the area of teacher quality, the percentage of secondary school teachers who hold a degree in the subject they teach has decreased.

Because states began the 1990s at various levels of achievement with respect to each of the

National Goals, the time and effort needed to reach each of the goals varies from state to state. The 1998 National Goals Panel report shows that some states have made significant progress toward the goals.

Progress in building students' competency to handle challenging subject matter varies. Twenty-seven states have increased their percentage of eighth-graders who achieved to at least the "proficient" standard in mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but many fewer states made progress toward the "proficient" level in reading among fourth-graders.[2] Seventeen states have increased the percentage of public school teachers who received support from a master or mentor teacher during their first year of teaching, a practice that helps curb attrition of high-quality teachers. Less progress has been seen with regard to safe, disciplined, and alcohol- and drug-free schools: thirty-seven states report higher percentages of public school teachers who indicate that student disruptions in class interfere with their teaching.

What We Propose

The continued pursuit of America's Education Goals will promote more evenly distributed improvement in education for all students nationwide. Federal programs help states and school districts continue the commitment to standards-based reform that will improve instruction for every child, strengthen teacher quality, increase flexibility with accountability for results, and assure every child a safe, healthy, and disciplined learning environment.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act would:

- Reaffirm the importance of working to achieve America's Education Goals by retaining all of the goals enacted by Congress in 1994. The eight goals are:
  1. School Readiness: All children in America will start school ready to learn.
  2. School Completion: The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
  3. Student Achievement and Citizenship: All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they will be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our global economy.
  4. Teacher Educational and Professional Development: The nation's teaching force will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
  5. Mathematics and Science: U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
  6. Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning: Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
  7. Safe, Disciplined, and Alcohol- and Drug-Free Schools: Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol, and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
  8. Parental Participation: Every school will promote parental involvement and participation

in the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

- Update the America's Education Goals to reflect our nation's continuing need for the goals. Although the goals are ambitious and will not be achieved easily, they continue to serve a valuable purpose in our national pursuit of excellence. The goals frame the context for educational improvement. Their reaffirmation helps us identify gaps; gauge achievement at the national, state, and local levels; and highlight effective practices.

- Rename the goals "America's Education Goals," from the National Education Goals, to reflect the pervasiveness of the goals in all levels of American education.

- Continue America's Education Goals Panel, a bipartisan body of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators, and two presidential appointees to report on the nation's progress toward our education goals.

NOTES

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TITLE I: HELPING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN MEET HIGH STANDARDS

TITLE I, PART A — IMPROVING BASIC GRANTS OPERATED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Supports the next stage of standards-based reform — implementing challenging standards and aligned assessments in every state — by retaining the current Title I requirement that states establish content standards, student performance standards, and assessments aligned to the standards by the 2000-01 school year.

- Holds districts and schools accountable for increases in performance of all students — including the lowest-performing students — by encouraging states to implement one rigorous accountability system for all schools and requiring them to at least develop one such system for their Title I schools;

- Authorizes additional funding for states and school districts to implement immediate, intensive intervention in low-performing schools and districts to improve their performance;

- Supports high-quality instruction by having Title I districts (1) set aside funds for high-quality professional development activities, (2) ensure that new Title I teachers are certified in the field in which they are teaching, and (3) raise the minimum qualifications for paraprofessionals working in Title I programs;

- Retains schoolwide provision that gives high-poverty schools — those schools with a poverty-level of 50 percent or higher — the flexibility to use Title I funds to improve the instructional program of the entire school;

- Strengthens schoolwide efforts to improve high-poverty schools by encouraging the use of coherent research-based strategies for reforming the entire school;

- Incorporates key research findings on improving the teaching and learning of reading, including encouraging districts to provide early identification and intervention for children who have trouble learning to read;

- Helps districts and schools develop high-quality instructional programs through peer review of schoolwide plans, school improvement plans, district Title I plans, and district improvement plans;

What's New
(continued)

- Strengthens provisions to help limited English proficient (LEP) students learn English and meet their state's challenging content and performance standards, including requiring states to give state reading and language arts assessments in English to LEP students who have been in the United States for three consecutive years or longer;

- Ensures equitable learning opportunities for Title I students who attend private schools by clarifying the issues on which public and private school officials are to consult, and by specifying that the equitable participation requirements apply to professional development and parental involvement;

- Encourages school districts to provide extended learning in Title I schools and to use extended learning time as a specific intervention to be provided to students in Title I schoolwide programs who are having difficulty in meeting high academic standards;

- Strengthens equal treatment for Title I schools by ensuring that they receive resources comparable to those received by other schools within a district, focusing on such factors as staff quality, curriculum and course offerings, and safe school facilities; and

- Supports the improvement of Title I by reserving 0.3 percent of Title I funds for national evaluation, state partnerships to gather information necessary to improve program management, applied research, technical assistance, and information dissemination.

Enacted in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty to help our most disadvantaged students, Title I now provides more than $8 billion each year on behalf of over 11 million children in 45,000 schools and is the largest federal investment in elementary and secondary education.

Title I funding helps improve teaching and learning in schools with concentrations of low-achieving and poor children to help them meet challenging state academic standards. By targeting federal resources to school districts and schools with the highest concentrations of poverty — where academic performance tends to be low and the obstacles to raising performance are the greatest — Title I helps address the severe educational problems facing high-poverty communities.

Of the 11 million Title I students, about two-thirds are enrolled in grades 1-6.[1] Minority students participate at rates higher than their proportion of the student population: non-Hispanic whites make up 36 percent of Title I participants, Hispanic students make up 30 percent, and African-American students 28 percent.[2] In comparison, non-Hispanic whites are 64 percent of

nationwide public school students, while Hispanics are 14 percent and African Americans are 17 percent of all students.[3]

The Title I grants to school districts serve about 260,000 preschool children, 167,000 private school children, close to 300,000 migrant children, and some 200,000 children identified as homeless. Title I services are provided to about 2 million students with limited English proficiency — almost one-fifth of all students served by the program and growing — and to 1 million students with disabilities.[4]

During the 1970s and most of the 1980s, Title I contributed to closing the achievement gap between students in urban disadvantaged communities and their peers in low-poverty areas[5] and between minority and non-minority students.[6] However, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the achievement gap widened again.

Prior to 1994, program evaluations indicated that fundamental change was needed in Title I to help at-risk students achieve to the same high standards expected of other children.[7] As a result, the Congress and the Administration restructured Title I in 1994 to focus on helping low-performing students master challenging curriculum and meet high standards.

What We've Learned

The 1994 reauthorization of Title I focused on supporting schools, districts, and states to ensure that all children meet the same challenging standards. The reforms were designed to link the program to standards-based state and local reform efforts across the nation. Though there has been progress in establishing state standards across the country, states and school districts have not fully implemented them in their classrooms.

High-poverty schools are beginning to show gains in student performance.

It has been just five years since Congress enacted the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 and, under the schedule mandated by that law, many states are still phasing in the 1994 provisions. Nonetheless, there is growing evidence that standards-based reforms supported by Title I are having a positive effect on teaching and learning. With federal support and encouragement, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have made great progress in establishing high academic standards in reading and mathematics.

Most important, the effect of standards-based reform is beginning to be seen. Reading and math performance among nine-year-olds in high-poverty public schools and among the lowest-achieving fourth-graders has improved significantly on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.[8] Similarly, three-year trends reported by states and districts show progress in the percentage of students in the highest-poverty schools who meet state standards for proficiency in mathematics and reading.[9]

Nonetheless, despite the progress that states and districts have made, a substantial achievement gap remains between students in the highest-poverty schools and their peers in low-poverty schools.[10]

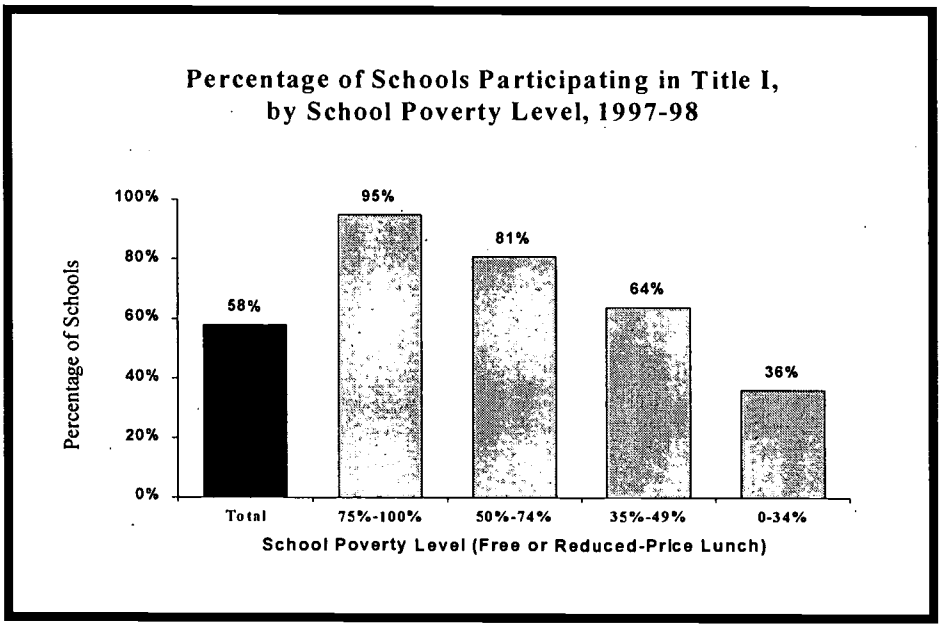
Title I concentrates resources on communities with the greatest needs.

Title I is intended to help address the greater educational challenges facing high-poverty communities by concentrating extra resources on school districts and schools with the highest concentrations of poverty, low academic performance, and great obstacles to raising performance. The record shows that the 1994 reforms heightened the concentration of resources where the need is the greatest:

- While the highest-poverty schools make up only about 15 percent of schools nationwide, they receive 46 percent of Title I funds. About three-fourths (73 percent) of the funds go to schools with 50 percent or more students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.[11]

- In 1997-98, Title I helped 95 percent of the nation's highest-poverty schools (where three out of every four students are from low-income families), up from 79 percent in 1993-94. The proportion of the highest-poverty secondary schools receiving Title I funds also increased as a result of the 1994 amendment, from 61 percent to 93 percent.[12]

- The share of Title I funds allocated to low-poverty schools (where fewer than one student in three is from a low-income family) declined from 49 percent in 1994-95 to 36 percent in 1997-98.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, unpublished tabulations from the *Follow-Up Survey of Education Reform.*

Almost all Title I funds go to local school districts to support instruction.

Approximately 99 percent of Title I dollars go to local school districts. School districts, in turn, use 90 to 93 percent of their Title I funds for instruction and instructional support, most often in reading and math.[13]

Title I provides flexible funding that may be used for supplementary instruction, professional development, after-school or other extended learning time programs, and other strategies for raising student achievement. For example, Title I funds used for professional development amounted to about $191 million in 1997-98, about 27 percent of total federal support for teacher professional development.[14]

Accountability systems tied to standards and assessments provide focus for schools.

Accountability systems for school quality, including student performance, can help schools and districts use data to identify student needs and make improvements. Recent research on accountability systems in 14 districts found that decision-making relied heavily on performance data. The study found that many districts were going beyond requirements of Title I to use performance data to identify and develop strategies for staff development and curriculum improvement to address gaps in performance.[15]

Even though Title I accounts for a relatively small portion (about 3 percent) of total federal, state, and local spending on elementary and secondary education, some evidence suggests that Title I accountability provisions are having a significant effect in driving reform in high-poverty districts. For example, a recent study of accountability in large urban districts found that Title I has been "a model and an instigator" for standards-based reforms and efforts to track student progress and improve schools.[16] Nationally, 50 percent of small, poor districts and 47 percent of large, poor districts report that Title I is driving reform to a great extent. Fourteen percent of all districts report that Title I is significantly driving reform to a great extent in their districts as a whole.[17]

States are making progress in implementing the accountability provisions of Title I, although the law does not require full implementation of accountability systems until final assessments are in place in the 2000-01 school year. But states are also facing new challenges as they transform their educational systems into higher-performing, results-based systems.[18] For example, although there is considerable overlap between schools identified for improvement under Title I and those identified through other state or local mechanisms, states report that they are having difficulty integrating the Title I requirements with their own systems. Only 23 state Title I directors report that the same accountability system is used for Title I schools as for other schools in their state.[19]

States and districts lack the capacity to turn around schools in need of improvement.

State school support teams, authorized in 1994, were intended first to provide support for schoolwide programs in their planning process and, as a second priority, to provide assistance to

schools in need of improvement through activities such as professional development or identifying resources for changing instruction and organization. The lack of capacity of state school support teams to assist schools in need of improvement under Title I, however, has been a major concern:

- The State Improvement Grants, designed to provide additional resources for the operation of school support teams, have not been funded in the past four years. Although state school support teams have primarily assisted schoolwide programs, their charge also includes providing assistance to other schools in need of improvement. In 1998, only eight states reported that school support teams have been able to serve the majority of schools identified as in need of improvement.

- Fewer than half (47 percent) of schools that reported in 1997-98 that they had been identified as in need of improvement also reported that this designation led to additional professional development or assistance.[20]

Agua Fria Union High School
Avondale, Arizona

Agua Fria High School enrolls about 1,700 students in grades 9 through 12. Half of its students are white, and almost 40 percent are Hispanic. Twenty-eight percent of the students receive free or reduced-price school lunches. The school's Title I targeted assistance program serves 525 students, most of whom are freshmen. For the first time in many years, Agua Fria's scores on standardized tests exceeded those of other high schools in the western suburbs of Phoenix.

Every academic department at Agua Fria has aligned its curriculum with the Arizona Academic Standards and raised its graduation requirements. Each academic department must now create a written plan to indicate how its teachers will use the standards in all of their classes. The school requires that students read, at a minimum, at the ninth-grade level before they graduate, a requirement the state dropped several years ago.

The Title I program supports the school's commitment to maintaining high standards and preparing students for work. The lowest-performing Title I students take a direct instruction reading class, which is offered as an elective. The course's curriculum is also aligned with state reading objectives and uses computer-aided instruction, worksheets, and writing journals. Other Title I students can use the Title I reading lab during their prep period or attend tutorial sessions available before, during, and after school. Some receive reading assistance from Title I aides in their regular English classes. During the summer, about 40 incoming Title I students take a six-week math immersion course.

A focus on high standards at the classroom level can make a difference in student achievement.

There is evidence of progress for students in high-poverty schools where staff members focus on challenging standards and strategies to help students achieve them. Preliminary findings from the *Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance* (LESCP), a study of instructional practices in 71 high-poverty schools, found that students whose teachers used a curriculum that reflected the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recorded higher gains in mathematics than did other students.[21]

Another study found that in high-performing, high-poverty schools, 94 percent of the principals reported using standards to assess student progress and 80 percent reported using standards extensively to design curriculum and instruction.[22] Nationally, the proportion of Title I principals who reported using content standards to guide curriculum and instruction to a great extent has increased from approximately half in 1995-96 to three-quarters in 1997-98.[23]

Teachers need more preparation to implement standards in the classroom.

Despite reported use of standards, most teachers do not feel very well prepared to implement them in the classroom. In 1998, only 35 percent of teachers in schools with 60 percent poverty or greater reported that they felt very well prepared to implement state or district curriculum and performance standards.[24]

Teachers' sense of preparedness is a key factor in predicting student outcomes, according to the LESCP study of 71 high-poverty Title I schools. The LESCP found that teachers' reported preparedness in both subject matter and instructional strategies had a positive relationship to student progress.[25] Current teacher training seems insufficient:

- In 1998, public school teachers — regardless of the poverty level of their school — spent a very limited amount of time in professional development, although they did focus on topics that supported standards-based reform. Most teachers are not participating in training that is intensive or sustained, two characteristics essential for effective professional development.[26]

- Over half (55 percent) of all teachers in high-poverty schools reported spending less than nine hours per year on training in the content areas. Over two-thirds (70 percent) reported receiving less than nine hours per year of professional development related to content and performance standards, yet this topic was the most common one on which teachers received training (81 percent of all teachers received professional development in this area).[27]

Teacher aides are widely used to provide instruction in Title I schools.

Paraprofessionals continue to be widely used to provide instruction in Title I schools, particularly in high-poverty schools. In the 1997-98 school year, 84 percent of principals in high-poverty

schools reported using aides, compared with 53 percent in low-poverty schools.[28] Although very few paraprofessionals have the educational background necessary to teach students, almost all (98 percent) were either teaching or helping teach students. Forty-one percent of Title I aides said that half or more of the time they spent teaching or helping to teach students was on their own, without a teacher present.[29]

Teacher aides in high-poverty schools are more likely than aides in other schools to lack the educational background that would qualify them to teach or help teach children. Only 10 percent of Title I aides in high-poverty elementary schools have a bachelor's degree, compared with 19 percent nationwide.[30]

Schoolwide programs are more likely to integrate Title I services into overall standards-based reforms at the school level.

Each Title I school operates either a Title I schoolwide program, in which Title I funds are combined with other funds to improve the quality of the whole school, or a Title I targeted assistance program solely for Title I students.

A recent study on high-achieving, high-poverty schools found that 79 percent of respondents from the study's sample — composed of high-poverty schools identified by states as among their highest achieving — operate schoolwide programs. Key characteristics of high-performing high-poverty schools include extensive use of standards to design curriculum and instruction, assess student work, and evaluate teachers; increased instructional time in reading and math; greater investment in professional development; comprehensive systems for monitoring student performance; attention to accountability; and a focus on the role of parents in helping students meet standards.[31]

P.S. 172
Brooklyn, New York

P.S. 172 enrolls just over 600 students, of whom three-quarters are Hispanic and virtually all receive free or reduced-price school lunches. The school has operated a Title I schoolwide program since 1993. The school has combined Title I, Goals 2000, Title VII, state, and private funds to help all of its students achieve high standards. Since 1994-95, P.S. 172's third- and sixth-grade reading and mathematics scores on the New York State assessments have exceeded district and city averages.

P.S. 172 has helped its teachers implement a literacy-focused curriculum through intensive professional development. A master teacher and a full-time staff development specialist mentor first-year teachers. Teachers share ideas and expectations within and across grades. Kindergarten teachers use hands-on learning strategies to introduce language, mathematics, and critical thinking skills. A phonics-based reading program helps all students in the primary grades build their vocabulary and comprehension, including those who speak little English. Between the third and sixth grades, a multicultural literature-based program and Internet-based lessons in social studies bring the written word alive for students.

Extended learning time can improve achievement, but is not fully utilized in Title I.

In a recent study of high-performing, high-poverty schools, 86 percent of the schools provided extended learning time for reading — such as extra instruction after school — and 66 percent provided extra time in mathematics.[32] In study of Maryland elementary schools, researchers found that the more successful schools were seeing consistent academic gains associated with extended-day programs.[33]

Title I resources can be used to provide extended learning programs. Although the proportion of schools offering before- or after-school programs in the early grades has increased from 9 to 39 percent since the last reauthorization, most Title I schools still do not offer such programs. Moreover, those schools that do offer the programs serve few students with them.[34]

Family involvement in education strengthens learning.

Principals and teachers understand the importance of parental involvement, especially in high-poverty schools.[35] First required under the 1994 reauthorization, Title I school-parent compacts — agreements between parents and school staff describing their shared responsibility to improve student learning — can bring schools and parents together and promote ongoing communication. However, the compacts need sustained support to be successful.

The proportion of Title I schools with school-parent compacts rose from 20 percent in 1994 to about 75 percent in 1998. A substantial majority of schools, especially those serving high concentrations of low-income children, find compacts helpful in promoting parental involvement.[36] However, 25 percent of Title I schools still do not have such agreements.

What We Propose

Title I is the primary source of federal support for raising the quality of instruction in high-poverty schools. The program challenges all students to reach high academic standards and helps provide the high-quality education necessary to reach those standards. The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Maintain a clear focus on raising standards for all children. Our proposal would retain the schedule for implementing standards-based reform established in the 1994 laws, including the requirement that states develop assessments aligned with their standards by the 2000-01 school year.

  Almost every state has established challenging content standards describing what all students, including Title I students, should know. States are now working on completing performance standards describing what students should be able to do. Soon all states will be administering assessments that measure student progress toward those standards.

To see meaningful gains in student learning, states and school districts must now translate state standards from policy documents into classroom practices. State standards and assessments will help teachers and schools focus instruction, curriculum, and professional development for school staff and enable them to determine how their students are doing and how they can improve. Standards and assessments will also help states and districts better identify schools in need of help.

- Strengthen accountability for districts and schools. Our proposal would encourage states to develop one rigorous accountability system that holds all schools, including Title I schools, accountable for making continuous and substantial gains in student performance. States will have the flexibility to use either a model outlined in the statute or an alternative that is at least as rigorous and effective. States without a single statewide accountability system would be required to develop one for their Title I schools.

- Reward improvement and success. Our proposal would require states to establish criteria for recognizing distinguished districts and schools. For example, these criteria might lead states to recognize districts and schools that have shown substantial gains for three consecutive years, have helped virtually all of their students meet the state's advanced level of performance, or have raised student achievement across gender and racial groups to promote equity in achievement. Acknowledging high-achieving and improving schools and districts helps them sustain their momentum and identifies lessons for other schools.

- Increase funding to help low-performing schools implement sound programs that improve student performance. Each state would be required to set aside 2.5 percent of its Title I allocation to strengthen state and local capacity to turn around low-performing schools. This set-aside would increase to 3.5 percent in the 2003-04 school year. At least 70 percent of these funds would go to districts to turn around low-performing schools. The remainder would be used to fund a state support system to improve schools and districts.

  This set-aside would provide more funds for swift, intensive intervention such as expert consultation and in-depth teacher training in schools and districts identified as being in need of improvement, and for stronger corrective actions in schools and districts that fail to show improvement after initial interventions.

  Funds would be used, first, in consistently low-performing schools and school districts to implement strong corrective actions that dramatically alter the structure of schools and the instructional strategies to help students in the school or school district. Districts would take at least one of the following corrective actions: (1) implementing a new curriculum that research has shown offers substantial promise of improving student achievement; (2) redesigning or reconstituting the school, including reopening it as a charter school; or (3) closing the school and allowing its students to transfer. In all instances of corrective action, districts may also allow students the option of transferring to a new school.

  Funds would then be used in low-performing schools or districts that have been identified as being in need of improvement to provide support and interventions, such as expert consultation and in-depth teacher training.

- Emphasize high-quality teaching. Teacher quality is the greatest single in-school factor in determining student success.[37] To enable teachers in our poorest schools to teach to challenging standards, our proposal would require districts to use at least 5 percent of their Title I funds in the first two years, and 10 percent in subsequent years, to support teacher development tied to challenging standards.

  In addition, all new teachers paid by Title I or working in a Title I school operating a schoolwide program would have to be certified in the field in which they teach or have a bachelor's degree and be working toward full certification within three years. By July 1, 2002, all paraprofessionals would be required to hold at least a high school diploma or equivalent, and only paraprofessionals with at least two years of college would be able to assist teachers in the classroom by providing appropriate instructional help, such as one-on-one tutoring. Paraprofessionals would participate in professional development, and school districts would be encouraged to develop career ladders to enable paraprofessionals to become certified teachers.

  This effort would be complemented by the teacher quality accountability provisions in Title XI, which would require teachers to be qualified, as well as by provisions in Titles II, III, and VII that would increase support for professional development.

- Strengthen schoolwide efforts to improve education in high-poverty schools. Schoolwide programs can be a highly effective way to help students in high-poverty schools meet high standards for performance. Rather than offering a separate program for Title I students, schoolwide programs improve the entire instructional program by combining federal, state, and local funds into one integrated program.

  Our proposal would continue to emphasize schoolwide programs in schools that have at least 50 percent poverty, because research shows that this concentration of children from poor families affects the educational achievement of all children in the school.[38]

  Our proposal would make schoolwide programs more effective by emphasizing coherent research-based approaches for raising student achievement by reforming the entire school. Key elements of schoolwide reforms are as follows:

  (1) A comprehensive needs assessment that examines the academic performance of all children against state standards, attendance, violence and drug use, class size, staff quality, parent and community involvement, and the availability of resources;

  (2) A coherent design to improve teaching and learning throughout the entire school based on data from the assessment. This design includes, for example, instruction by highly qualified staff; ongoing high-quality professional development; effective research-based methods and strategies to strengthen the core academic program, increasing the amount and quality of learning time, and meeting the needs of the most at-risk children; and strategies to increase parental involvement. These elements must be aligned and included in a comprehensive design that addresses the needs of the whole school; and

(3) A regular review of the school's progress in implementing its program and meeting its goals for student achievement. The school would use the results of this review to continuously improve the design and implementation of its schoolwide program.

Accounting practices can be a barrier to successfully integrating program funds. Our proposal would require each state to work to reduce its fiscal and accounting barriers so that school districts can combine Title I funds with funds from other federal, state, and local sources to achieve schoolwide reform.

- Encourage peer support for schoolwide programs and school improvement strategies. To support critical feedback and improvement on schoolwide programs and school improvement plans, our proposal requires school districts to peer-review schoolwide plans and school improvement plans and states to peer-review district-level Title I plans and district improvement plans. Schools and districts can learn a great deal from each other.

- Focus attention on improving the education of limited English proficient (LEP) children. Our proposal would continue to hold Title I schools accountable for the performance of LEP students in reaching high academic standards and learning English.

  Schools would annually assess the progress of LEP students in learning English and use the results of those assessments to modify instruction. As under current law, states would have to include LEP students in state assessments and (to the extent practicable) test them in the language and manner most likely to yield accurate information about what they know. At a minimum, States would be required to have tests available in Spanish. To assess student progress and hold schools accountable for teaching English and academic content, LEP students who have attended schools in the United States for three consecutive years would be tested in English on the state's reading or language arts assessment.

- Incorporate key findings of reading research and encourage preschool programs. Our proposal would make clear that a district may provide services directly to eligible preschool children in all or part of its jurisdiction, through any participating Title I school, or through a contract with another public preschool program, such as Head Start. The proposal also would emphasize that such services must focus on the developmental needs of participating children and use research-based approaches that build on children's competencies and lead to school success. Our proposal would also encourage the use of diagnostic assessments in the first grade to ensure early identification and intervention for students with reading difficulties.

  Research shows that children who receive enrichment to develop their language and cognitive skills early in life show higher reading achievement in elementary and middle school.[39] Title I currently authorizes services to preschool children, but these provisions need more clarity.

- Ensure equitable learning opportunities for Title I participants who attend private schools. Our proposal would clarify that teachers and families of participating private school students

are to participate in Title I professional development and parental involvement activities on an equitable basis, and that services provided to private school students are intended to meet the needs of those students.

Our proposal would also strengthen consultation between public and private school officials. First, new provisions would clarify that consultation includes meetings among school district and private school officials and continues throughout the implementation and assessment of Title I services. Additional changes would specify that the issues discussed during consultation are to include:

- The amount of funds generated by low-income private school children;
- The methods and sources of data to be used to determine the number of low-income students in participating school attendance areas who attend private schools;
- How and when the school district will make decisions about the delivery of services to eligible students attending private schools; and
- How the results of assessments will be used to improve services to eligible children attending private schools.

- Promote greater use of extended learning time to help students achieve high academic standards. Although the use of extended learning time programs has increased significantly and recent evidence has affirmed their effectiveness, fewer than half of Title I schools offer these programs. Where they do exist, few students participate.

  Because extended learning time can improve student performance, our proposal would strengthen such opportunities by encouraging school districts to provide extended learning time in Title I schools and encouraging its use as a specific intervention to be provided to students in Title I schoolwide programs who are having difficulty in meeting high academic standards. Our proposal would also require school districts to describe in their plans how they will promote the use of extended learning time in Title I schools.

- Target funds by implementing unfunded provisions of current law to ensure that Title I resources go to the highest-poverty school districts and schools. The 1994 reauthorization created the new "targeted grants" formula and changed the within-district allocation provisions. The Congress also increased the portion of Title I funds appropriated for concentration grants over the past several years. Although the targeted grants have not been funded, the other changes in reauthorization have resulted in a larger proportion of Title I funds flowing to high-poverty schools.

  The redistribution of funds to the poorest schools and districts has been a positive development. However, 86 percent of funds still flow through the "basic grants" formula, which spreads dollars thinly across virtually all districts. All of the remaining funds are distributed according to the "concentration grants" formula, which is a flawed mechanism because, although it provides funds only to higher-poverty districts, it takes an "all or nothing" approach to targeting. Targeted grants, in comparison, provide proportionately higher payments to districts with higher percentages or numbers of poor children and are thus a fairer vehicle for targeting funds. Our proposal would require that at least 20 percent of the

Title I, Part A, appropriation flow through targeted grants, while maintaining the other allocations in current law.

Finally, under current law, Puerto Rico's allocations are artificially constrained relative to what the commonwealth would receive if it were a state. Our proposal would require that Puerto Rico's allocations be determined on the same basis as allocations to states, with this change phased in over five years to avoid disruption of current allocations.

- Strengthen comparability provisions to ensure that Title I schools are treated the same as all other schools in a district. By July 1, 2002, districts would be required to ensure comparability in terms of the qualifications of staff, curriculum and course offerings, and condition and safety of school facilities. With the expectation that all children are to meet challenging state standards, it is more important than ever to ensure that high-poverty schools are comparable qualitatively and quantitatively to other schools in their districts before they receive Title I funds.

- Build capacity to develop new knowledge about program operation and innovations. Our proposal would authorize the Secretary to reserve 0.3 percent of Title I funds to conduct evaluations of Title I programs to determine their effectiveness, consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. Our proposal would mandate a national assessment of Title I to examine, for example, its effect on State standards-based reform systems and student academic performance relative to that system. Our proposal would also mandate a national longitudinal study of Title I schools to provide an accurate description of Title I's short-term and long-term effectiveness. Finally, our proposal would authorize state partnerships to inform program management and support continuous improvement by states, districts, and schools.

  Our proposed evaluation funds would also support technical assistance, program improvement, and replication activities, consistent with the other major ESEA programs.

TITLE I DEMONSTRATION AUTHORITY IN PART A — COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the commitment to comprehensive school reform by reauthorizing the Title I demonstration authority and the Fund for the Improvement of Education, through which the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program operates;

The recently established CSRD program:

- Helps schools adopt comprehensive, research-based reform efforts that strengthen the entire school;
- Helps schools identify, select, and implement effective models that are based on reliable research and effective practices and that best match the learning needs of students;
- Supports continuous professional development of school staff to implement comprehensive school reform designs; and
- Supports high-quality, ongoing technical assistance from states, districts, and external experts in schoolwide reform.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program was established in November 1997 under the Title I Demonstration authority and the Fund for the Improvement of Education. CSRD provides incentives to schools, especially Title I schools identified for improvement, to implement research-based programs to strengthen the quality of education within the entire school. By the fall of 1999, approximately 2,500 schools will have been selected to receive funding to implement comprehensive school reform programs based on reliable research and effective practices.

What We've Learned

Comprehensive reform efforts — such as those supported by CSRD, which draw on methods and strategies with a track record of success — can be a powerful tool for school improvement. Research on effective schools points to the importance of high standards and rigorous curriculum for all students, a school environment that promotes collaboration and mutual respect among staff, ongoing and high-quality staff development, efficient school management, and sustained parental involvement. An increasing number of districts and schools are undertaking and getting

results from such approaches, often using models developed externally to help guide coherent school improvements.

Research supports the comprehensive approach to school reform. Several studies have found larger gains in student achievement in schools that have implemented comprehensive programs than in comparable schools without such programs.[40]

These studies, as well as a recent evaluation of reform models by the Rand Corporation,[41] identify the essential elements for the implementation of effective schoolwide reform. Critical ingredients for successful implementation of reforms include stable, supportive leadership at both district and school levels; district support in helping schools choose reform models that best fit their needs; and district provisions for some school autonomy and resources for professional development and planning.

Over 600 schools nationwide have already received competitive CSRD awards to work with experienced partners to implement their comprehensive school reform plans. Early reports indicate that the legislation is providing valuable incentives and support for schools to undertake research-based, effective schoolwide reforms. As a result, CSRD is spurring significant interest in identifying what works to help students reach high standards.

Harriet Tubman Elementary School
New York City

Just a few years ago, P.S. 154 in New York City, where 99 percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunch, was one of the lowest-performing schools in the city. After being assigned to the Chancellor's District — the school district created for the lowest-performing schools — school leaders, parents, and teachers devised a plan for comprehensive change. The school adopted Success for All, an intensive reading program. By 1997-98, P.S. 154 had been removed from the state's list of low-performing schools and reading scores had improved; the percentage of students performing at or above grade level on the citywide assessment had risen from 30 percent (in 1996) to 46 percent.

Nathaniel Hawthorne Elementary School
San Antonio, Texas

Hawthorne Elementary School is a high-poverty school where 96 percent of students qualify for free lunch and 28 percent of students have limited proficiency in English. In 1992-93, Hawthorne adopted Core Knowledge, a model that offers content guidelines to help schools provide challenging curriculum and a common core of knowledge for students in the early grades. In 1994, only 24 percent of students in the school passed all portions of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). In 1998, almost 63 percent of students passed the TAAS, with the largest gains over the period being made by African American students.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Continue the promising CSRD program by reauthorizing the Title I demonstration authority and the Fund for the Improvement of Education. Maintaining the program will provide stable support for continuing reforms, enable the program to be fully implemented, and allow for the evaluation of its effect on student achievement.

TITLE I, PART B — EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Improves the quality of Even Start projects by emphasizing research-based approaches to effective family literacy programs and encouraging state-level collaborations and coordinated services;
- Increases intensity of family literacy services by providing instruction through the summer and encouraging the use of distance learning;
- Strengthens the qualifications of instructional staff, including paraprofessionals;
- Fosters continuous improvement by strengthening the requirement for independent local project evaluations;
- Authorizes funds for exemplary projects to serve as models; and
- Increases the program's compatibility with welfare reform initiatives.

Even Start is a family literacy program intended to break the cycle of poverty by teaching parents the literacy and parenting skills they need to help their children learn to high standards. Even Start is implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services. There are about 750 Even Start projects throughout the United States, serving over 34,000 families.

Even Start's integrated, intergenerational approach makes it unique among federal programs. It serves parents and their young children, from birth until age 8, through programs that coordinate early childhood education, parenting education, and adult literacy (either adult basic education or English as a second language).

The U.S. Department of Education distributes Even Start funds to states by formula. States make subgrants to partnerships that include one or more school districts and one or more nonprofit community organizations, public agencies, or institutions of higher education.

What We've Learned

The Even Start Family Literacy program serves families who are most in need. In 1996-97, approximately 90 percent of Even Start families had incomes at or below the federal poverty level. Eighty-six percent of Even Start adults were enrolled without a high school diploma or GED, and 45 percent had not advanced beyond the ninth grade. In more than one-third of Even Start families, parents did not speak English at home. Three-quarters of these parents had difficulty speaking or reading English.[42]

The Even Start program benefits both adults and children, according to national assessments. Adults make moderate gains on measures of math and reading achievement and improve the literacy environment of the home. Children make gains on measures of language development and school readiness.[43]

To build on this success, the Even Start program should improve the quality, intensity, and frequency of instruction and the retention of participants. Even Start instructors and aides should have stronger qualifications. While most Even Start instructors have at least a bachelor's degree, many aides do not. Currently, only 34 percent of instructors and 22 percent of aides have any special certification or endorsements relevant to Even Start instruction.[44]

The first national evaluation of Even Start found that program intensity was related to educational outcomes for children and adults.[45] Although the hours of instructional services have increased on average,[46] they may still be insufficient to cause meaningful learning gains.

Retention of participants also needs improvement. Almost 50 percent of the new families who entered the program in 1995-96 dropped out within the first year, although they had not met their goals or moved away from the area.[47] The national evaluation has shown that the longer children participate in Even Start, the greater their gains on measures of language development and school readiness.[48] The program needs to stress continuity of services throughout the year, including over the summer months.

Although local Even Start projects must conduct independent local evaluations, state administrators are not required to review them. A 1998 report found that the quality of local evaluations varied and that they were rarely used systematically by Even Start projects "to manage and improve their programs."[49]

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children would:

- Improve the quality of local Even Start projects by asking them to take account of best available research in planning and implementing programs, especially research on preventing reading difficulties and promoting language development in young children.

- Increase intensity of services by providing instruction through the summer months, encouraging the use of distance learning where appropriate, and requiring states to assess

projects' efforts to retain families in the program. These changes are designed to help retain families in the program longer and increase the academic learning of families during the summer and in remote, rural areas.

- Strengthen the qualifications of instructional staff, including paraprofessionals. Projects would be required to hire instructional staff with more education and with certification in the subjects they are teaching. By July 1, 2002, paraprofessionals providing instructional support, such as follow-up educational activities in home visits, would be required to have at least two years of college and be under the direct supervision of a teacher.

- Increase the quality of local projects by supporting state collaborations and coordinated services.

- Promote improved implementation by requiring states to submit a plan. The plan would describe state efforts to develop and use indicators of program quality to evaluate and improve Even Start projects, ensure that each project fully implements all of the Even Start program elements, conduct the competition for subgrants, and coordinate resources to improve family literacy services.

- Foster continuous improvement by strengthening the provision for independent project evaluations.

- Allow states to fund up to two exemplary projects to serve as models and mentor sites for other family literacy programs in the state. State models would help states and localities learn from well-tested, proven models that achieve significant outcomes for low-income families and have the capacity to provide technical assistance to other projects.

- Increase the program's compatibility with welfare reform initiatives. The explicit addition of "career counseling and job placement services" clarifies that they are allowable costs and emphasizes the allowance of such support services, increasing projects' flexibility in meeting the needs of welfare recipients.

TITLE I, PART C — EDUCATION OF MIGRATORY CHILDREN

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Holds states accountable for helping migratory students meet challenging state academic standards;
- Simplifies the formula that allocates funds among states and better targets migratory students;
- Limits annual changes in state program allocations to prevent disruptive fluctuations in funding and establishes funding minimums to ensure that states with small migrant populations can afford effective programs;
- Streamlines planning by no longer requiring states to develop both a comprehensive plan for service delivery and an application for program funds;
- Increases parental involvement;
- Increases support for coordination activities, including interstate records transfer; and
- Simplifies the state incentive grants program.

Overcoming the poverty, mobility, and limited English proficiency characteristic of migrant children requires a high degree of program flexibility and attention to educational and support services far beyond those traditionally funded by state and local governments. For this reason, Congress authorized the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966.

The MEP is a formula grant program that helps states offer services specifically for children of migrant agricultural workers and fishers. These services differ from state to state, depending on the needs of each state's migrant children and the time of the year when they are present.

Unlike most educational programs, MEP services often take place outside the regular school day, in the summer or through distance learning and correspondence programs. MEP services are geared to meet the needs of out-of-school, working youths. The MEP also provides support services that link migrant children and their families to community resources.

What We've Learned

In 1996-97, states reported approximately 580,000 MEP participants, including 475,000 served in the regular term and 285,000 in the summer term. Most migratory students are concentrated in California (210,000) and Texas (115,000). Five other states — Florida, Washington, Oregon, Kansas, and Kentucky — each reported more than 20,000 students eligible for funding.[50]

Over the last decade, summer projects have grown faster than the regular program. They increased from serving approximately 100,000 student in 1984-85 to 285,000 students in 1996-97,[51] and now serve approximately 60 percent of the number of students served during the regular term.[52] In a study of schoolwide programs that serve migrant students, over 70 percent of the schools offered summer or intersession programs.[53] Eighty percent of the summer or intersession programs were available to all students in the school.[54]

The state consortium arrangement reduces administrative costs and helps states share information. In FY 1998, the Department approved eight consortia arrangements involving a total of 32 states, an increase from five consortia serving 15 states in FY 1995.[55] Several of the consortia were formed to facilitate the transfer of records. Others share resource materials, model practices, and provide greater access to technology to improve the education of migrant students. State MEPs that participate in consortia are eligible to receive small incentive grant awards above their state MEP formula grant awards to provide direct services to migrant children.

Technology-based information management is an invaluable tool for coordinating among schools and states and for connecting students to continuous educational resources. Several projects across the country have received federal grants to use technology to improve educational access and continuity for migrant students and to transfer student records and information.

Two years after the elimination of the Migrant Student Records Transfer System (MSRTS) in 1994, most States and school districts relied on mail, telephone, and fax to transfer records for migrant students.[56] Nineteen states have some type of electronic system in place, although many of these systems are used for maintaining, rather than transferring, student records.

Some program participants believe that the current formula for making the annual state MEP allocations is overly complex and likely to cause large year-to-year variations in funding. These funding variations can disrupt the continuity of even basic program services, especially in states receiving small program allocations.

The current formula relies on data that are burdensome to collect. The current statutory references to "estimates" and to "full-time equivalents (FTE)" are ambiguous. Moreover, they require either a burdensome collection of data on the number of days of residency for each migrant child in each state or the use of increasingly dated FTE adjustment factors calculated with 1994 data.

Because the program is operated and administered by states, states that receive small program allocations have had difficulty in both establishing adequate MEP programs for migrant children and paying the costs of needed state administration.

These difficulties are exacerbated by the annual fluctuations in some states' need for agricultural workers (e.g., due to droughts, floods, employer closings, and relocations) which sometimes result in abrupt drops in certain states' MEP allocations. Even states that have maintained stable numbers of migrant children from one year to the next have seen allocations fall as other states identify additional migrant children and require more of the overall MEP allocation. While the instability of state funding levels reflects the dynamic reality of a mobile population, it has also severely impaired the ability of states with relatively few migrant children to maintain an effective migrant education program.

When a state's federal funding drops but the number of migrant children does not, the state must cut back on efforts to identify and reach out to migrant children, as well as on the services provided to them. As a result, the state is likely to report even fewer migrant children the following year, beginning a downward spiral in the quality and availability of services.

In fiscal 1998, 29 of the 51 states participating in the MEP received grants of less than 1 percent of the total formula grants pool. Eighteen states received grants of less than $1 million, and four received less than $200,000.

What We Propose

Our proposal for the Migrant Education Program will clarify and simplify the program's statutory provisions, enabling states to provide much-needed services to migrant children.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Hold states accountable for student performance. Consistent with our emphasis on high standards for all children, our proposal would require applications by the states to describe how they will include migrant students in state assessments required under Title I, Part A.

- Simplify the state funding formula. Our proposal would base a state's allocation on the number of eligible children between the ages of 3 and 21 who resided in that state during the previous year, plus the number of those children who received MEP-funded services in summer or intersession programs. This proposed approach is simpler to understand and administer, minimizes states' data-collection burden, and encourages the identification and recruitment of eligible children. Counting children served in summer or intersession programs twice would reflect the greater cost of those programs and would encourage states to provide them.

- Limit annual changes in state program allocations and establish funding minimums. No state would receive an allocation greater than 120 percent or less than 80 percent of its allocation for the previous year, except that each state would receive, at a minimum, $200,000. This provision would limit the disruptive impact of significant changes in migrant child

populations from year to year. The $200,000 minimum would ensure that each participating state receives funds necessary to carry out an effective program, including the costs of identifying eligible children.

- No longer require states to develop both a comprehensive service-delivery plan and a program application. The most important elements of the plan, which discusses the integration of services and joint planning across all programs, would be incorporated into the application requirements.

- Increase the maximum amount that the Secretary could reserve each year from the program appropriation to support coordination grants. This increase is consistent with the Department's recent appropriations acts and would increase the amount of funds available to help states and school districts transfer the educational and health records of migrant children.

- Simplify the state incentive grants program. First, our proposal would allow the Secretary to determine whether incentive grant funds should be devoted to other coordination activities. Second, our proposal would delete the requirement that these awards be made competitively. The competitive grant requirement has created a needlessly restrictive and complicated process for evaluating applications when all applications merit approval and sufficient funds are available. Finally, our proposal would award future incentive grants on the basis of the state's participation in multistate consortia arrangements that improve the delivery of services to migrant children whose education is interrupted. Current law awards grants to states whose participation in a multistate consortium reduces their MEP administrative funds.

- Strengthen parental involvement by clearly requiring state and local MEP consultation with parental advisory councils and clarifying that the MEP is subject to the Title I, Part A, provisions to increase the involvement of individual parents.

TITLE I, PART D — CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO ARE NEGLECTED OR DELINQUENT

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Emphasizes the importance of holding all students — including those in institutions for neglected or delinquent youth — to the same challenging academic standards; and
- Concentrates resources to more effectively serve neglected or delinquent students by requiring school districts to help these students with their fair share of Title I, Part A, funds and to ensure they receive educational services that are comparable to services provided to other Title I students.

Title I, Part D, authorizes two programs to serve neglected or delinquent children and youth. The first program, the state program authorized by Subpart 1, assists states financially in operating educational programs for children and youth who are in institutions or community day programs for neglected or delinquent children or youth in adult correctional facilities.

The second program, the local agency program, was created in 1994 under Subpart 2. It provides funds to states to allocate directly to school districts to help them serve children and youth in locally operated correctional facilities and noninstitutionalized at-risk children and youth. As a result, Subpart 2 often supports the operation of dropout prevention and intervention programs for at-risk youth, such as pregnant and parenting teens, gang members, students who are a year or more behind their grade level, migrants, immigrants, and students with limited English proficiency.

What We've Learned

The population of delinquent and neglected students is isolated and very disadvantaged. These students are, on average, three years behind in grade level and generally lack job skills. The population served by this program has grown over the past decade. Despite declines in 1995 and 1996, juvenile arrests for violent crimes in 1996 were 60 percent above the 1987 level.[57]

The 1994 establishment of the local agency program expanded the scope of Part D to serve additional categories of at-risk youth. Before 1994, school districts were required to use the portion of their Title I funds for local delinquent youth to target services to those students. Now, however, the federal funds allocated based upon delinquent children finance a broader program for at-risk students. Moreover, this program for at-risk students is administered by states, rather than by the districts where the institutions and students are located.

Although there has been no evaluation of the effectiveness of Part D, Subpart 2, the program has proved to be difficult and confusing for states to administer.

Under Subpart 2, states send funds to districts with high proportions of youth in local correctional facilities for dropout prevention and intervention programs that serve all at-risk students, rather than just institutionalized, delinquent youth. This variety of programs dilutes services to especially needy students in local delinquent and correctional institutions. Moreover, unlike children in local correctional and delinquent institutions, many of these at-risk students already receive services from other Title I program funds.

Subpart 2 also reduces districts' incentives to help students in local correctional and delinquent institutions, because Title I, Part A, funds are no longer allocated to individual districts for these students. Evidence suggests that school districts have difficulty using Subpart 2 funds to operate viable programs of sufficient size, scope, and quality for either at-risk students or for children in local correctional facilities.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Focus funds on serving students in correctional facilities and delinquent institutions by eliminating Subpart 2 and redirecting the funding to Title I, Part A. Instead of funding the ineffective and unduly complicated Subpart 2, our proposal would make the funds available for the sole purpose of serving students in local correctional facilities and delinquent institutions. The proposal would require school districts receiving Title I, Part A, funds for these children to use these funds to provide institutionalized students with Title I services that are comparable to the services received by students served in other district-based Title I programs. This proposal would allow school districts to operate programs for students residing in local correctional and delinquent institutions in the same way that they currently operate programs for students living in institutions for neglected children.

- Highlight the importance of helping institutionalized neglected and delinquent students learn to the same challenging standards as every other student in the state by requiring state plans to ensure that participating children are held to the same standards and offered comparable services as those for students in traditional public schools.

- Allow states to use multiple measures of student progress in conducting program evaluations, as appropriate. This provision would recognize that while neglected or delinquent students should be held to challenging standards, they may require assessments different from those for children in traditional public schools.

- Amend the name of the program to "State Agency Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected or Delinquent" to more accurately reflect the function of the program after the deletion of Subpart 2.

TITLE I, PART E — READING EXCELLENCE ACT

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Supports the intent of the law to improve reading and reading instruction by applying the findings of scientific reading research;
- Clarifies the law's purpose — ensuring that students can read by the end of third grade — by limiting participation to schools serving students in the third grade or below; and
- Emphasizes the Reading Excellence Act's commitment to serving the poorest schools and students and to improving reading instruction through a comprehensive approach by including it in Title I.

Enacted in October 1998, the Reading Excellence Act (REA) provides resources to high-poverty schools to improve the teaching and learning of reading for children from prekindergarten through third grade. The program supports research-based reading activities that are integrated into state and local reform efforts. Local projects are designed to improve instruction at the preschool and elementary school levels, work with families to ensure that children receive support for learning, and provide extended-learning opportunities that enhance classroom instruction in reading. The REA will help poorly performing schools improve and provide additional support to good schools struggling to serve their neediest students.

The REA supports four main activities related to reading:

- Professional development;
- Extended learning, such as tutoring and after-school programs;
- Family literacy; and
- Transition programs for kindergarten students as they move into first grade.

The REA strongly emphasizes the importance of scientific research on reading, including findings related to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. To ensure broad-based participation and commitment to state and local reading goals, each state's reading excellence program will include a reading and literacy partnership among parents, teachers, the governor, the chief state school officer, members of the state legislature, eligible school districts, community organizations, family literacy service providers, and state directors of federal or state programs supporting reading instruction. In addition, each school district will work in partnership with a community-based organization.

The Department of Education distributes REA funds competitively to states, which in turn make competitive grants to high-need school districts to support two programs: Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance.

What We've Learned

According to the 1998 results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 68 percent of fourth-graders in the highest-poverty public schools cannot read at the basic level on NAEP. These children are already far behind their more advantaged peers (23 percent of children in schools with lowest-poverty rates cannot read at the basic level).

In the last 20 years, considerable research has been completed on how children learn to read. A new consensus on "what works" in teaching reading has recently emerged. This consensus is summarized for parents, teachers, and others in the National Research Council's report *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children.*[58] The study clearly identifies the key elements all children need in order to become good readers. Specifically, children need to learn how to recognize letters and sounds and read for meaning. They also need opportunities to practice reading with many types of books. While some children need more intensive and systemic individualized instruction than others, all children need these essential elements in order to read well and independently by the end of third grade.

A recently published analysis clearly demonstrates that nearly all children — about 98 percent — can become effective readers if given intense early reading instruction.[59] In addition, literacy-related professional development for teachers can have direct, beneficial effects on teachers' interactions with children and on children's literacy development and readiness.[60]

Other studies have concluded that extended-learning reading programs that incorporate research-based elements produce improvements in reading achievement.[61] Tutoring interventions are particularly effective when there is close coordination with the classroom or reading teacher,[62] when there is intensive and ongoing training for tutors,[63] and when tutoring sessions are well structured and carefully scripted.[64]

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Demonstrate our commitment to the program as enacted by proposing only modifications to clarify the intent of the law. The REA is committed to funding only high-quality proposals based on scientific research.

- Focus the program on ensuring that all children read well by the end of third grade by limiting funding to districts and schools that serve students in third grade or below. This change reflects the purpose of the statute, which is to ensure that children receive appropriate and effective reading instruction in their earliest years.

- Allow states to receive successive grant awards. The statute now limits each state to only one grant during the program authorization period. Our proposal would limit each state to one grant at a time, allowing it to compete for a second grant to continue program activities once the first grant ends.

- Encourage consistency in state funding decisions by requiring states to submit a description of the process and the criteria they will use to approve applications from school districts.

- Fund technical assistance, program improvement, and replication activities by allowing the Secretary to reserve up to 1 percent of the program funds for those purposes.

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TITLE II
HIGH STANDARDS IN THE CLASSROOM

TITLE II, PART A — TEACHING TO HIGH STANDARDS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Creates a new standards-based reform grant program, Teaching to High Standards, that will support state and local efforts to help all students achieve challenging state academic standards. The program will take the place of three current programs — Title III of Goals 2000, the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, and Title VI — and will focus on giving teachers the tools they need to raise student achievement;

- Advances efforts to make high standards a reality in every classroom by supporting state and local efforts to align instruction, curricula, assessments, and professional development with challenging academic standards;

- Focuses federal resources on sustained, intensive, content-based, and collaborative professional development in core content areas, which research demonstrates and teachers report improves teaching the most;

- Addresses the urgent need to reduce teacher attrition by giving priority to professional development proposals that support new teachers during their first three years in the classroom;

- Increases assured federal funding for professional development in mathematics and science;

- Promotes educational equity by distributing approximately 50 percent of funding for local school districts through a formula targeted toward high-poverty districts;

- Encourages innovation by distributing approximately 50 percent of funding for local districts through a grant competition;

- Enhances teacher quality by supporting state and local efforts to improve systems for licensing, hiring, evaluating, and rewarding teachers;

What's New
(continued)

- Authorizes support for several national initiatives to improve the quality of teachers, including (1) the creation of a nationwide job bank for teaching positions; (2) efforts to increase the portability of teacher credentials, pensions, and credited years of experience among states and school districts; and (3) the development and implementation of programs to recruit talented individuals to become classroom teachers and retain them for more than three years;

- Support national initiatives to recruit talented individuals to become principals and prepare new and experienced principals to serve as instructional leaders; and

- Promotes high-quality education for students in all schools by providing for the equitable participation of private school students and teachers in activities supported by Teaching to High Standards funds.

With federal support and encouragement, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have made great progress in establishing high academic standards in reading and mathematics. Educators nationwide are now working to improve classroom practice, curricula, and assessments to help all students meet or exceed high standards in reading, math, and other core academic subjects.

The Teaching to High Standards Initiative will help educators apply high standards to improve learning in American classrooms. The initiative will support state and local efforts to: (1) align curricula and assessments with challenging state and local content standards, (2) provide teachers with sustained and intensive high-quality professional development in core academic content areas, (3) support new teachers during their first three years in the classroom, and (4) improve teacher quality and help ensure that all teachers are proficient in relevant content knowledge and teaching skills.

This new initiative, the next generation of Goals 2000 and standards-based reform, would build on the state reform program under Title III of the Goals 2000 Act, ESEA Title II (Eisenhower Professional Development), and ESEA Title VI (Innovative Education Program Strategies) in current law.

What We've Learned

The great majority of states have made significant progress in developing content standards that define what all students should know and understand in the core academic subjects. However, many states are still developing assessments and crafting the performance standards that set the benchmarks for acceptable performance.

Many teachers and school administrators are just beginning the challenging process of reforming curricula to reflect state standards. One recent national study found that only 36 percent of teachers of the core academic subjects currently feel "very well prepared" to implement state or district standards.[1] These and other findings underscore the pressing need to continue federal support for the implementation of comprehensive, standards-based reform at the local level.

Professional development is an important component of ongoing federal efforts to raise standards and improve student achievement. Last year, 89 percent of Goals 2000 grantee districts reported spending Goals 2000 funds for professional development linked to standards.[2] Similarly, findings from the same study of Title VI of the ESEA, which gives districts funds to support a wide range of innovative program strategies, indicate that many large districts that receive substantial allocations of Title VI funds use a significant portion of those resources for professional development. However, professional development funded through Title VI may not be linked to standards.[3]

Career-long, high-quality professional development for teachers is a central and indispensable element of the larger effort to help all students achieve to high standards. Research indicates that the knowledge and skills teachers bring to the classroom affect all aspects of their classroom practice, including the achievement of their students. A review of 60 studies examining the correlation between school resources and student learning found that teachers' experience and education are clearly associated with increases in student achievement.[4]

Research also indicates that high-quality professional development can contribute to improvements in teachers' skills and practice and thereby increase student achievement. According to a recent study, the longer California mathematics teachers engaged in ongoing, curriculum-centered professional development that supported reform-oriented teaching practice, the better their students did on the state mathematics assessment.[5] Other studies have confirmed more broadly that high-quality professional development focused on academic content — and on how students learn that content — contributes to gains in student achievement.[6] Since the late 1980s, Community School District #2 in New York City has invested in sustained, intensive professional development that has contributed to steady increases in student achievement.[7, 8]

Sustained and high-quality professional development programs that provide mentoring and support for beginning teachers can help to reduce teacher attrition. The need for such programs is great, because some 22 percent of all new teachers currently leave the profession within the first three years.[9] Retaining talented teachers will be an even more urgent priority in the decade ahead, as U.S. schools must hire approximately 2.2 million teachers to accommodate increasing enrollments, continued attrition, and the retirement of many veteran teachers.[10] Comparative international research indicates that other countries are more likely than the United States to support beginning teachers with lightened workloads, in-depth professional development, and outstanding mentor teachers.[11]

Research is also clarifying the kind of professional development that teachers find most useful. The national evaluation of the Eisenhower Professional Development program indicates that teachers believe the activities that contribute most to improving their own knowledge and skills are those that:

- Sustain activities over an extended period of time;
- Connect professional development activities to state and district standards and assessments;
- Strongly emphasize deepening teachers' knowledge of academic content and understanding of ways that students learn that content;
- Encourage teachers from the same grade levels, departments, and schools to work in teams; and
- Offer opportunities to observe and practice the skills and techniques being introduced.

Preliminary analyses from the Eisenhower evaluation also suggest that teachers regard the Eisenhower-supported professional development activities administered by institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations as being highly effective. They are likely to be intensive and of meaningful duration, emphasize academic content, and involve active learning. Seventy-five percent of participants in activities administered by institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations report that they enhanced their in-depth knowledge of math and science, compared with 49 percent of participants in Eisenhower activities administered by districts.[12]

But despite this growing consensus on the kind of professional development that works, relatively few of America's teachers currently participate in activities of sufficient quality and duration to improve their classroom practice. For example, while 81 percent of the teachers of core academic subjects reported in 1998 that they had participated in standards-based professional development within the previous year, approximately 50 percent of those teachers had participated for eight hours or less. Only 7 percent had participated in standards-based professional development for 32 hours or more.[13]

What We Propose

Teaching to High Standards would take the place of three existing federal programs, drawing the best aspects of each, with a new initiative to ensure that all students can achieve to challenging state standards in the core academic subjects. Teaching to High Standards builds upon the lessons learned from the Goals 2000, Eisenhower Professional Development, and Title VI programs.

The initiative would (1) support the ongoing efforts of states and school districts to develop challenging content and student performance standards and to align curriculum, assessments, and classroom practice to those high standards; and (2) assist states, school districts, and institutions of higher education in providing teachers and administrators across the country with access to sustained, intensive, high-quality professional development.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Continue the work of standards-based school reform. Teaching to High Standards funds would support the ongoing efforts of states to develop content and student performance standards and aligned curricula and assessments. In support of those efforts, districts could also use funds to purchase materials that are not normally provided by the state or the district as part of the regular instructional program.

- Invest in the knowledge and skills of America's teachers. Teaching to High Standards would focus federal funding more tightly on the type of professional development that research demonstrates and teachers report is most beneficial. The proposal would direct funds, for example, toward efforts to strengthen instruction in core academic content areas rather than toward general strategies for improving classroom practice. The proposal would also promote the use of professional development activities that are sustained over time, rather than those that are condensed into a single workshop, and that incorporate active collaboration among teachers, rather than offer passive lectures and disconnected practice in isolated classrooms.

- Support reform at the state and local levels. Teaching to High Standards funds would be allocated by formula to the states.
  - States could use up to 10 percent of the funds to support state reforms, including developing content and performance standards and assessments.
  - An annual national total of $60 million would allow state agencies of higher education to award competitive grants to colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations (such as museums and libraries) to carry out innovative professional development activities in partnership with school districts.
  - All of the remaining funds would be distributed directly to school districts. Half of these funds would be allocated through a formula targeted toward high-poverty districts to ensure support for ongoing professional development; the other half would be distributed through a state-administered grant competition to promote quality and recognize model programs. Districts would apply for both formula and competitive funds through a single application.

- Increase assured federal support for professional development in the priority subjects of mathematics and science. As part of its focus on linking professional development to academic content, our proposal would increase the annual $250 million dollar set-aside for professional development in math and science under the Eisenhower program to $300 million under Teaching to High Standards.

  The poor performance of U.S. students on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study and the evidence that high student achievement depends greatly on high-quality teaching make it imperative to continue this special emphasis. Moreover, with many new standards-based curricular materials available, a forthcoming study in the spring of 2000 from the National Academy of Sciences will provide research-based recommendations for the improvement of mathematics

teaching and learning. With over a decade of "lessons learned" from earlier professional development efforts, the math and science education community is poised to make significant progress in teacher quality.

- Support high-quality professional development activities previously supported by the Eisenhower Professional Development program. Teaching to High Standards also builds upon the Eisenhower program by expanding support for the professional development partnerships administered by institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations. These partnerships have been a successful element of the Eisenhower program. Projects that support teachers in their first three years will be given a priority under these subgrants.

- Promote efforts to enhance teacher quality. States and school districts would be able to use Teaching to High Standards funds to design, implement, or improve state and local systems for licensing, hiring, supporting, evaluating, and rewarding teachers and principals. These efforts could include the development of a teacher licensure system that is both more rigorous and more flexible and the creation of incentives to encourage current teachers to earn additional certifications in subject areas for which their school districts have identified a shortage of qualified teachers.

- Support new teachers and help to reduce teacher attrition. Our Teaching to High Standards proposal includes a new provision requiring states to give priority to proposals that would support teachers during their first three years in the classroom. These programs could include activities such as mentoring, team teaching with experienced teachers, and observation of and consultation with experienced teachers.

- Provide a reliable base of support for professional development and other initiatives. The formula funding for school districts included in the Teaching to High Standards proposal would continue the sustained federal support for professional development that has been central to the Eisenhower program's success, providing districts and schools with a firm foundation on which they can build long-term, high-quality professional development programs.

- Encourage innovation and increase resources through competition. The competitive funding for school districts included in Teaching to High Standards would provide additional resources to districts with the highest-quality proposals and the greatest need to allow them to expand and intensify their efforts. The competition would also promote innovation and careful planning in program design.

- Reward results. Under the Teaching to High Standards proposal, states could extend the three-year grants for two additional years if the grantee meets its specific, predetermined program goals.

- Look to the future. Our proposal would support projects of national significance, including the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

- Focus on recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers as national priorities. Teaching to High Standards would also authorize several new national initiatives to recruit, place, and support the next generation of American teachers, including (1) the creation of a nationwide job bank for teaching positions; (2) support for efforts to increase the portability of teacher credentials, pensions and credited years of experience among states and school districts; and (3) the development and implementation of programs to recruit highly talented individuals to become classroom teachers and to retain them for more than three years.

- Promote activities to prepare principals to be leaders of reform. States and school districts would be able to use Teaching to High Standards funds to prepare new and experienced principals to serve as instructional leaders.

- Support high-quality teaching and learning for students in all schools. Teaching to High Standards provides for the equitable participation of private school students and teachers in professional development and other program activities.

TITLE II, PART B — TRANSITION TO TEACHING: TROOPS TO TEACHERS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the work of the Troops to Teachers program in recruiting, preparing, and supporting retired military personnel as teachers in high-need areas; and
- Builds on the success of Troops to Teachers by recruiting, preparing, and supporting talented midcareer professionals from diverse fields as classroom teachers through the Transition to Teaching initiative.

The Transition to Teaching initiative continues and builds upon the highly successful work of the Department of Defense's Troops to Teachers program. Troops to Teachers was created in 1994 to help improve public school education by injecting the talent, skills, and experience of military service members and other federal civilian personnel into high-poverty schools.

Transition to Teaching would retain Troops to Teachers and provide funds to recruit and support a wide range of talented career-changing professionals — such as engineers and scientists, corporate professionals, and returning Peace Corps volunteers — as teachers, particularly in high-poverty school districts and high-need subject areas. Former members of the military services would continue to be a key focus of the new program's recruitment efforts.

What We've Learned

The Troops to Teachers program has been a particularly effective vehicle for recruiting former members of the military services and placing them as teachers in high-need subject areas and school districts.[14] Since the program was established in January 1994, over 3,300 former military personnel have been hired as teachers in 48 states and the District of Columbia. More than 83 percent of the participants are still in the classroom today. The average participant is 41 years old. Teachers recruited through Troops to Teachers are twice as likely as traditional public school teachers to teach mathematics, science, or special education and three times as likely to be members of minority groups. On surveys, they also indicate a greater willingness to teach in inner cities or rural communities.

As a result of increasing enrollments, natural teacher turnover, and the retirement of many veteran teachers, our nation faces the challenge of hiring more than 2 million teachers over the next 10 years.[15] High attrition rates further complicate the challenge of providing all of America's students with high-quality teachers. The problem of attrition is particularly acute among new teachers, approximately 22 percent of whom leave the profession after teaching for

three years or less.[16] In addition, research shows that highly qualified teachers are not evenly distributed across academic disciplines or geographic areas.[17, 18]

Midcareer professionals interested in changing jobs are an important and largely untapped resource for addressing teacher shortages. Recent studies have found that a significant number of midcareer professionals who possess strong subject matter skills are interested in beginning a teaching career.[19, 20]

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Continue the successful Troops to Teachers program for recruiting, preparing, and supporting retired military personnel as teachers in high-need subject areas and school districts.

- Build on the Troops to Teachers approach to support similar programs for other midcareer professionals by awarding grants to public agencies, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations to recruit, prepare, and support career-changing professionals from diverse fields whose knowledge and experience could help them become successful teachers.

TITLE II, PART C — EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Provides high-quality professional development opportunities for early childhood educators to improve their knowledge of and skills at working with young children and their families, particularly in developing language and literacy skills; and
- Improves the quality of early childhood education programs for children in poverty.

The Early Childhood Educator Professional Development initiative would enhance the chances for future academic success of our young children, particularly those living in poverty. The initiative would create professional development opportunities for early childhood educators who work in a variety of settings and serve high concentrations of children living in poverty. It would award competitive grants to local partnerships of entities that provide professional development for teachers (such as universities), and other agencies such as local school districts or Head Start agencies. Our proposal would focus on equipping early childhood educators with the tools they need to help children develop language and literacy skills.

What We've Learned

National studies indicate that most early child care and education programs fail to help children prepare for the rigors of classroom learning experiences. One study concluded that only 14 percent of these programs are of high quality, while 5 percent of them are dangerous to the health, safety, and development of children.[21]

Consistently poor early education programs hinder children's cognitive and language development, pre-reading skills, and other age-appropriate development. As a result, some children are unprepared to attend school and learn to read, the foundation for nearly all later learning. Recent research indicates that young children living in poverty are both more positively influenced by high-quality programs than are their advantaged peers and more vulnerable to harm from poor programs.[22]

Research also indicates that the quality of the language and literacy environment in early childhood programs predicts later language development, reading success, and other academic outcomes for children.[23]

The training and education of teachers and caregivers are directly related to the quality of the early education they provide,[24] and the quality of their service, in turn, is directly related to children's readiness for school.[25] As a result, early childhood educators with more education and

training provide the higher-quality language stimulation and literacy experiences that are critical for children's success in school.[26]

Currently, 40 percent of preschool teachers have only a high school diploma and another 10 percent have a two-year degree from a community or junior college. About half of all assistant teachers and aides have no more than a high school diploma. Preschool teachers receive only about 10 hours of training each year.[27] With more preparation, early childhood teachers would be better able to contribute to the language and literacy development of the children in their care.

Increasing the number of well-trained early childhood educators would lead to significant improvements in the quality of early childhood education for children in poverty. Focusing professional development on early language and literacy will enhance children's reading and overall school success.

What We Propose

The foundations of school success are laid in the early childhood years. Children's success in school depends in large part on strong early language, literacy, and pre-reading skills; meaningful involvement by families; and access to high-quality early childhood education. Well-trained educators are crucial to improving the quality of early childhood education programs and, thus, young children's learning.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Authorize new funding for professional development for early childhood educators in high-poverty communities. New resources would increase the number of high-quality, research-based professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

- Fund partnerships between early childhood education programs and organizations that provide high-quality professional development, such as institutions of higher education. This initiative would strengthen existing professional development activities for early childhood educators. Community-based partnerships tend to use available resources efficiently, promote high-quality professional development for educators in a variety of educational settings, and strengthen relationships between public schools and community-based early childhood programs. To encourage communities to work together in helping children make the transition from preschool to school, priority would be given to partnerships that include one or more school districts that operate early childhood education programs for children from low-income families in high-need communities.

- Target resources to where they are most needed by requiring that partnerships include entities that serve children from low-income families in high-need communities. Children living in poverty have the greatest need for high-quality early childhood programs.

- Promote high-quality, research-based professional development activities including:
  - Training that is based on the best available research on child language and literacy development as well as on the diverse needs of children in the community;
  - Coordination with professional development efforts for early childhood educators throughout the community;
  - Assessments to determine critical professional development needs; and
  - Accountability through clear identification of program goals, objectives, and progress measures, as well as annual reporting responsibilities against these indicators.

TITLE II, PART D — TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR IMPROVING SCHOOLS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Supports a national, comprehensive, and integrated system of technical assistance and information dissemination that is driven by the demands of teachers, schools, districts, and states; leverages resources; and promotes high quality;
- Empowers customers to identify their needs, select technical assistance services, and build their capacity for school improvement;
- Redirects resources from the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers to states and 100 school districts with the largest numbers of children in poverty to purchase the technical assistance services they need;
- Provides states and districts with the information they need to make informed judgments about the effectiveness of various sources and types of technical assistance;
- Uses technology and electronic networks to create a nationwide system that supports interactive information sharing and dissemination to improve educational practices;
- Ensures an available supply of expert technical assistance in areas of high need by supporting a network of providers dedicated to national priorities, including two technical assistance centers focused on linguistically and culturally diverse students; and
- Increases coordination among technical assistance providers, states, and school districts to meet local needs and target high-poverty districts and low-performing schools.

Two 1994 laws — the Improving America's Schools Act, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act — reconfigured the Department of Education's technical assistance services. First, the laws consolidated 48 existing technical assistance centers operated by five different categorical programs into a single authority providing for a network of 15 Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers.

Second, the laws created three other technical assistance programs to address priority areas: the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Education Consortia, the Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TECs), and the Parent Information and Resources Centers (PIRCs).

Finally, the laws created a new system of state-led school support teams to provide assistance to Title I schools.

What We've Learned

Research and practice suggest that high-quality technical assistance has the following attributes:[28]

- It is responsive to customer needs and aligned with high academic standards;
- It is based on sound research;
- It provides a level of service that is appropriate for customers' capacity and needs;
- It is sufficient in scope, intensity, and duration;
- It builds customers' capacity to identify and solve problems on their own;
- It is carefully targeted; and
- It incorporates strategies for reaching a large number of customers effectively.

Although the current technical assistance programs are still relatively new, feedback from states and large school districts — particularly those with large numbers of poor families or low-performing schools — seems to indicate that technical assistance services need to be more market-based in responding to the demands of schools. In addition, states and local districts express an increasing need for help in identifying their particular technical assistance needs, selecting appropriate providers, and coordinating resources to develop and implement their own integrated systems to support improvements in teaching and learning.

The technical assistance model created in 1995 by the School-to-Work Technical Assistance program provides "lines of credit" directly to grantees to purchase technical assistance from high-quality providers. Early surveys indicate that grantees are very satisfied with the services they obtain through this demand-driven model.[29]

Technical assistance now consists of a variety of resources throughout ESEA that support the implementation of programs and reforms, as well as a system of various federally funded providers. Early evaluations of providers funded under this Act are as follows:

- Title I School Support Teams. By fall 1998, Title I school support teams were serving schools in all but five states,[30] but the number of schools served by school support teams appears to be limited. The State Improvement Grants, designed to be the mechanism to provide additional resources for the operation of school support teams, have not been funded in the past four years.

  In 1998, almost half of all state Title I directors (24) reported that there were more schools in need of school support team services than Title I could accommodate; only 20 Title I directors reported that their programs were able to accommodate all schools in need.[31]

- Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers. In 1994, the comprehensive centers were charged with responsibility for supporting state and local implementation of federal programs. State customers appear to be most satisfied with assistance on general reform topics; customers at the state and district levels require additional assistance in understanding federal legislative provisions, particularly in regard to the flexibility of the law.

The centers are generally targeting their services to high-priority customers, but further targeting is needed. In fiscal year 1998, 50 percent of center services to schools were targeted to schoolwide programs and 65 percent to high-poverty schools.[32]

- Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Education Consortia. In 1998, Eisenhower Regional Consortia training and technical assistance activities reached over 36,000 participants, slightly more than half of whom were classroom teachers. Over a third of the participants received 12 hours or more of assistance. Almost two-thirds of Eisenhower Consortia customers report that they represent schools that serve a majority of at-risk students.[33]

  The Eisenhower Consortia services receive high marks for quality and usefulness.[34, 35] Specific professional development and networking activities sponsored by the consortia appear to have had a measurable effect on teachers: Nearly two-thirds of participants in selected professional development activities reported that they had incorporated some new behavior into their jobs as a result of what they had learned.[36]

  The consortia have collaborated to achieve economies of scale and to take full advantage of the special capacities of individual consortia. Together with strategies to leverage resources from other institutions and programs, these collaborations have helped the consortia stretch their limited resources.[37]

- Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TEC). The technology consortia provide expert assistance to states, districts, and schools on how to use educational technology to help students achieve to high standards. The R*TEC have helped states and districts apply for Technology Literacy Challenge Fund grants; conduct technology needs assessments; and acquire equipment, hardware, software, and wiring. The R*TEC also help teachers use technology well through teacher professional development.

  The R*TEC target many of their products and services to students who have traditionally have had limited access to technology. Surveys indicate high satisfaction with R*TEC services. More than 80 percent of R*TEC customers describe them as "an important resource" that facilitates learning. More than 90 percent of participants in regional, statewide, or schoolwide alliances facilitated by the R*TECs rated them highly or moderately well in increasing access to resources, supporting school reform, and addressing educational concerns.[38]

> The NetTech technology consortium helps improve the use of technology in teacher education programs in Maine and Pennsylvania. NetTech supports the Technology in Teacher Education Network, which helps higher-education faculty to integrate technology in their instruction and efforts to train prospective teachers. NetTech also supports the NorthEast States' Commission on Technology, which supports the education technology-related professional development for district superintendents in Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

- Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRC). Since 1995, the PIRCs have helped parents, families, and schools involve families in their children's education, in part through training for parents, educators, and community members and partnerships with states to support intensive school improvement efforts.

  Participation has risen steadily as funding levels and the number of PIRCs have increased. Parent centers are now operating in every state and are increasingly involving schools and coordinating with other service providers.

  Other sources of technical assistance. The federal government supports additional expert technical assistance through ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as the Regional Education Laboratories authorized by the Educational Research and Improvement Act. In addition, states, with the support of federal funds, play an important role in providing technical assistance to districts and schools. In 1998, 91 percent of state administrators of federal programs reported that their programs provided technical assistance on at least one topic to subgrant recipients, while 41 percent reported that they provided assistance on eight or more topics. Surveys of local administrators substantiate the prevalence of state-provided technical assistance.[39]

  Finally, the Department of Education disseminates written information that provides guidance, resource opportunities, and examples of promising strategies to support school improvement efforts. Surveys indicate that this information reaches the largest number of state and local staff and generates the highest levels of satisfaction. In 1998, Title I principals gave higher ratings to the ERIC Clearinghouse System — operated by the Department — than to any other federal source of technical assistance.[40]

However, federal technical assistance can be improved. A more responsive and effective system needs to be built on principles of supply and demand and federal technical assistance efforts need to take fuller advantage of the potential of new telecommunications technology to disseminate information and deliver services.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Respond to a growing market demand for increased local decision-making by increasing state and local opportunities to determine what technical assistance is most helpful to them. The proposal would continue, throughout the Act, to provide a variety of resources to states and districts to improve local capacity, based upon the needs they identify. In addition, our proposal would eliminate the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers and redirect the funds by formula to states and the 100 school districts with the largest numbers of children in poverty. These grants would allow states and districts to coordinate resources and directly purchase the technical assistance services they require.

- Support informed decisions by providing information to states and districts to help them improve their own technical assistance systems and select high-quality technical assistance services and providers.

- Create a national comprehensive and cohesive system of high-quality technical assistance to support school improvement by:

  - Expanding the use of technology for disseminating meaningful information to support improved education practice. Our proposal would create a technology-based information dissemination system that supports and reflects the needs and input of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. In addition, all technical assistance providers would be required to use electronic dissemination networks and World Wide Web-based resources, as well as other technologies, to expand their reach and improve delivery of high-quality technical assistance.

  - Helping all children, regardless of language or cultural background, achieve to high standards. Our proposal would create two new technical assistance centers dedicated to improving teaching and learning for limited English proficient, migratory, Indian, and Alaska Native students. Our proposal would also require federal technical assistance providers to target intensive support to districts and schools most in need, particularly high-poverty, low-performing schools.

  - Ensuring expertise in areas of national importance. Our proposal would continue to support a network of technical assistance providers in key areas, including improving math and science instruction, integrating education technology into effective classroom practice, and promoting meaningful parent and family involvement. In particular, the role of the Parent Information and Resource Centers as resources to schools, as well as to families, would be better defined.

NOTES

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TITLE III
TECHNOLOGY FOR EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Stimulates the development and use of innovative technologies to create engaging teaching and learning environments while expanding our knowledge about effective uses of educational technology;
- Continues support for expanding access to challenging coursework and educational resources by encouraging new approaches to distance learning and interactive information exchange;
- Encourages partnerships among school districts, colleges and universities, community-based organizations, and businesses to spark innovation and new forms of technology;
- Prepares teachers to effectively integrate technology into their classrooms to help students master high academic standards;
- Narrows the technology gap by targeting high-need districts and increasing their capacity to use education technology to prepare all students to achieve to high academic standards;
- Increases access to job networks, training, and student tutoring through community technology centers; and
- Disseminates information, promising practices, and teaching strategies through the Regional Technology in Education Consortia.

New and developing computing and networking technologies continue to expand the range of accessible resources, skills, and learning environments. Used creatively, technology can support inquiry-based learning in which students experiment and explore challenging content rather than just read about it. Students may be able to understand difficult concepts earlier and more readily if supported by interactive visualization, simulation, and "hands-on" modeling opportunities provided by technology. The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 took the first step toward ensuring that our students would also have access to this changing technological world and its opportunities to support achievement to high standards.

Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is dedicated to using advanced technology to help all students develop problem-solving skills and achieve high academic standards, as well as achieve technological proficiency. The 1994 establishment of federal educational technology programs signaled the beginning of a comprehensive approach to

substantially improve the technological capacity of schools and integrate education technology effectively in classrooms.

> An overwhelming majority of Illinois principals say that the effective use of technology can significantly increase student learning, according to a recent survey. More than 86 percent said that students had developed an increased interest in classroom learning and activities, and 83 percent said that technology promoted self-motivated learning, exploratory skills, and creativity.

Title III promotes national leadership and state and local activities in innovation and professional development to help students reach challenging academic standards through the effective use of technology. In the near future, technology — including Internet II, as well as virtual communications — will reshape ways of knowing and learning. Our schools must also reshape traditional ways of delivering instruction to promote opportunities for individualized discovery, establish new learning communities, and extend interactive communication beyond the school.

What We've Learned

School and classroom access to education technology and the Internet has steadily increased since the 1994 reauthorization of the ESEA, which contained the authorizations for the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, the Technology Innovation Challenge Grant Program, the Regional Technology in Education Consortia, and the Star Schools Program. However, the "digital divide" between classrooms in high- and low-poverty schools persists. Moreover, some research indicates that teachers' ability to integrate technology effectively into classroom instruction is limited. Finally, there are indications that the way that schools use computers varies with school poverty rates.

Access to computers at school. The ratio of students per multimedia computer decreased from 21 students per computer in 1996-97 to 14 students per computer in 1997-98. In 1997-98, federal funds paid for 50 percent of computers purchased for high-poverty schools and 14 percent of computers purchased for low-poverty schools.[1]

Classroom connections to the Internet. The percentage of schools and classrooms connected to the Internet is increasing, yet the "digital divide" between classrooms in high-poverty and low-poverty schools persists. In 1998, only 39 percent of classrooms in high-poverty schools — compared with 62 percent of classrooms low-poverty schools — were connected to the Internet.

Percentage of Classrooms Connected to the Internet, 1994-1999

Year	All classrooms	Classrooms in high-poverty schools	Classrooms in low-poverty schools	Gap in access between classrooms in high- and low-poverty schools
1994	3 %	2 %	4 %	2 %
1995	8	3	9	6
1996	14	7	18	11
1997	27	14	36	22
1998	51	39	62	23

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *Internet access in public schools and classrooms: 1994-1998.* Washington, DC: Author.

Home access to computers and the Internet. Children in poor families are less likely than other children to have access to computers and the Internet in their homes. In 1997, 13 percent of households with incomes between $10,000 and $14,999 had computers, while 61 percent of households with incomes between $50,000 and $74,099 had computers. Five percent of lower-income households with computers had on-line services, compared with 32 percent of higher-income households with computers.[2]

Teacher and school capacity. In a 1998 survey, only 20 percent of teachers reported feeling very well prepared to integrate educational technology into classroom instruction.[3] With the rapid growth in new tools and approaches, this proportion is not expected to dramatically increase. In addition, few teachers have been prepared to help students use technology creatively.

> At the Wheelersburg, Ohio, middle school, the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund is helping teachers become more familiar with technology. As they learn, teachers' instructional strategies are becoming more creative and sophisticated. Teachers involved in the project continually report on the accomplishments of their students, while students are now asking what more they can do instead of saying, "We have to do *all* these papers?" Students are becoming increasingly proficient in using technology and exploring challenging content.

Income and computer usage. Teachers in poor schools are likely to ask students to do "what the computer tells them to do" (i.e., drill and practice), while teachers in more affluent schools are more likely to use technology to engage students in problem solving and critical thinking activities.[4]

What We Propose

Since the 1994 reauthorization, the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, Technology Innovation Challenge Grant, and Star Schools programs have charted a path toward modernizing schools for the Information Age. Building on the success of these programs, the Department proposes to further develop and focus educational technology on helping all students meet high academic standards. After all, to achieve to high standards, students must have access to and be

challenged by the most current and useful resources, be familiar with the world far beyond the classroom walls, and be able to express themselves and their knowledge and skills through a variety of media.

Our reauthorization proposal would help build teachers' capacity to frame new experiences for students and successfully and creatively integrate technology into the classroom and curriculum.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Stimulate the development of innovative technology applications. The proposal would create the Next Generation Grants program to develop and expand cutting-edge technologies to improve education. This discretionary grant authority would result from the consolidation of the resources of the Technology Innovation Challenge Grants and Star Schools programs. Our proposal would continue to encourage the use of technology such as Web-based instruction to provide access to challenging content, such as Advanced Placement courses, physics, and foreign language. A variety of entities — school districts, states, colleges and universities, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and businesses — would be encouraged to compete for funds in a public-private consortium.

  Projects would create models or applications that use technology to improve teaching and learning, such as simulations, distance learning, and Web-based instruction. This new discretionary authority would also promote the sharing of examples of promising practices developed under this authority in order to bring effective models to scale.

  The proposal would include a priority for projects that serve traditionally underserved populations, such as low-income students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency.

- Continue the commitment to the use of educational technology to enhance instruction aligned to high standards. The proposal retains the core components of the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF): the formula for allocating funds to states, the awarding of competitive grants to districts, and the requirement for state and local technology plans. The proposal would also require states to coordinate TLCF technology plans with state plans for standards-based education reform. State applications would describe how states will ensure that technology is accessible to, and usable by, all students, particularly students with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

  In addition, the proposal would continue the success of the current Math-Line telecommunications demonstration project by expanding the electronic professional development effort. The Telecommunications Program for Professional Development in the Core Content Areas will help bring this math model to teachers of other subject areas.

- Target support to the neediest schools and communities. The proposal would explicitly target TLCF resources to high-poverty, low-performing schools. To help build the necessary capacity to use technology to improve teaching and learning, the neediest districts would also be encouraged to become partners with "technology proficient" school districts, institutions

of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. The proposal would support the development or expansion of community technology centers to serve disadvantaged residents of high-poverty communities. The centers would provide access to technology and training for community members of all ages.

- Focus on improving the capacity of districts, schools, and teachers to use technology well. The TLCF would expand access to technology in schools and classrooms. It would also strengthen the focus on using intensive, high-quality professional development to improve teachers' skills to better teach to challenging standards and effectively integrate technology into their classrooms. Under the proposal, the Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TECs) would target funds to high-poverty districts to improve their capacity to effectively use technology-based resources to support school reform efforts. In particular, the R*TECs will focus on professional development that prepares educators to be effective developers, users, and evaluators of educational technology.

- Support the preparation of future teachers to effectively use advanced technology in their classrooms. Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology would support consortia of public and private entities to train new teachers to use technology to create engaging learning environments that prepare all students to achieve to challenging state and local standards.

- Expand our knowledge and provide national leadership. The proposal would help stimulate and coordinate other public and private efforts to enhance and expand innovative technology applications. Title III would continue to support a variety of efforts to improve technology access and quality and better understand how students learn through technology, including effective approaches to developing, using, and evaluating educational technology. The proposal would also continue the national commitment to providing access to high-quality educational television and video programming for preschool and elementary school children through Ready-to-Learn Digital Television.

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TITLE IV
THE SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Emphasizes the importance of quality, research-based programs;
- Concentrates funds where they will do the most good by requiring states to award competitive subgrants to high-need school districts with high-quality proposals;
- Improves coordination between state education agencies and governors' programs;
- Provides training and technical assistance to teachers and administrators to help them respond to violence, disorder, and drug use in school;
- Helps districts respond to violent or traumatic crises;
- Creates drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free learning environments;
- Promotes safety by requiring individual evaluations, appropriate treatment, and continued educational services for students who bring a gun to school;
- Strengthens program accountability; and
- Supports lifelong student fitness through new demonstration grants to identify and promote exemplary school-based programs.

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) is the federal government's major initiative to prevent youth drug use and school violence. The SDFSCA State Grants Program provides funds to all 50 governors and state education agencies and to local districts to support a broad range of drug and violence prevention strategies. Governors' program funds go to local grantees, mainly community groups and organizations. Under current law, the state education agency funds flow to school districts, primarily by a formula based on enrollment.

The SDFSCA also authorizes National Programs, a broad discretionary authority to prevent drug use and violence. National programs provide for training, demonstrations, direct services to districts with severe drug and violence problems, information dissemination, and program evaluation. The statute also authorizes grants to colleges and universities to fund drug and violence prevention programs on college campuses.

To strengthen the quality of drug and violence prevention programs implemented with SDFSCA funds, last year the U.S. Department of Education established four Principles of Effectiveness for all grant recipients effective July 1, 1998. The principles are:

- Principle 1: A grant recipient shall base its program on a thorough assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems in the schools and communities served.

- Principle 2: A grant recipient shall, with the assistance of a local or regional advisory council that includes community representatives, establish a set of measurable goals and objectives, and design its activities to meet those goals and objectives.

- Principle 3: A grant recipient shall design and implement its activities based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the strategies used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive student behavior.

- Principle 4: A grant recipient shall evaluate its program periodically to assess its progress toward achieving its goals and objectives and use its evaluation results to refine, improve, and strengthen its program and to refine its goals and objectives as appropriate.

A related law, the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, requires that each state have a law requiring districts to expel, for at least one year, any student who brings a firearm to school. Expelled students may be referred to an alternative educational setting, and administrators may modify expulsions on a case-by-case basis. The Pro-Children Act of 1994 requires schools to adopt policies that prohibit smoking in indoor facilities where educational services are provided.

What We've Learned

When SDFSCA was reauthorized in 1994, it was expanded to include violence prevention efforts. Other major changes were the addition of a requirement that states and districts develop measurable objectives for their SDFSCA programs and a new provision targeting a portion of program funds to a small number of districts with a high need for services. Currently, 10 percent of the districts with the highest needs in each state share 30 percent of the state education agency allocation. The average state award approaches $10 million, but most school districts receive less than $10,000.

G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School is a high school in Miami, Florida with 5,200 students. During the 1994-95 school year, Braddock High had over 2,500 violent or drug-related incidents. A multifaceted school improvement plan, paid for with SDFSCA funds, implemented innovative programs like a student court for conduct violations, a program to increase responsible behavior, and an off-campus alternative school for students with special needs. Within a short time, Braddock High demonstrated remarkable results. Over the next two years, disruptive conduct decreased by 25 percent, drug possession decreased by 30 percent, and vandalism decreased by 50 percent.

A 1998 national survey of student drug use in grades 8, 10, and 12 demonstrates that alcohol use has slightly dipped in grades 8 and 10, although it remains high overall, and that the use of other illicit drugs has declined after six years of steady increases.[1]

The Annual Report on School Safety 1998 concluded that schools nationally are comparatively safe places, and that students in school today are not significantly more likely to be victimized than in previous years. Crime in school facilities or on the way to or from school has fallen, and most school crime is theft, not serious violent crime. However, a small proportion of schools experience high rates of crime and violence. In 1996-97, 10 percent of all public schools reported one or more serious violent crimes to the police.[2]

The program's Principles of Effectiveness were developed largely in response to a 1997 study of drug and violence programs in 19 school districts commissioned by the Education Department. The study found that few districts considered research findings when planning their prevention programs. Proven prevention approaches were not widely used.[3] Specifically, the study found that:

- Even within districts attempting to deliver consistent programs, the amount and content of prevention programming and the availability of support services for students varied greatly among classrooms and schools. Implementation was inconsistent because teachers and counselors simply did not have enough time, support, training, or motivation.

- Districts rarely implemented approaches that, according to current research, have the greatest potential for making a difference for students, including teaching children how to resist social influences and correcting misperceptions about peer drug use. These approaches are relatively expensive for schools, particularly in terms of teacher training and staff time.

- Although all school districts periodically conducted informal assessments of their programs, fewer than half conducted these evaluations formally or considered results in selecting or altering their programs.

- Characteristics of promising programs include a commitment to the program on the part of the staff; leadership by the prevention program coordinator; community involvement and a sense of shared responsibility for drug prevention; and district commitment to the program, particularly in staff training and use of school-based coordinators.

Through SDFSCA National Programs, the Department has convened an expert panel to identify school-based programs that have proved effective in promoting safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. The Department will disseminate information to other school districts about the exemplary and promising programs identified by the panel.

What We Propose

Guided by extensive input from program participants, evaluation studies, and program reviews, our proposal makes significant changes that will promote real improvements in school

environments for students and teachers nationwide. Specifically, the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Emphasize the importance of research-based programs. States would award subgrants competitively to school districts and other applicants, largely in accordance with the quality of their plan. Consistent with the Principles of Effectiveness, program activities would be required to implement research-based programs to address identified needs and established goals and to regularly assess progress. The proposal would also increase support for state activities to help applicants create and implement effective, accountable programs.

- Concentrate funds on areas of high need. States would focus program funds on districts that have a significant need and propose high-quality programs. States would also ensure that grants are of sufficient size and scope to help improve safety and order in the school and reduce student drug use.

- Improve coordination between state education agencies and governors' programs. Our proposal would require both the state agencies and the governors to focus their efforts on strategies for safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. The state agencies and governors' offices would submit a joint state application for funding under the program, and administer a joint technical assistance and accountability effort to support and improve programs implemented by local districts and other recipients.

- Provide training and technical assistance. The Department of Education would create a center designed to improve the capacity of teachers and administrators to identify and implement effective, research-based strategies that promote safe, orderly, and drug-free learning environments. This initiative, combined with increased resources for training at the state level, would help teachers and administrators gain the skills they need to respond to violence, disorder, and drug use in the school environment.

- Help schools respond to a violent or traumatic crisis. To improve our ability to respond to serious school violence, our proposal authorizes the "School Emergency Response to Violence" (SERV), under which the Secretary could provide rapid assistance to school districts that have experienced violent or other traumatic crises that have disrupted the learning environment.

- Create drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free learning environments. To address continuing concerns about adolescent drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, districts receiving Safe and Drug-Free Schools funds would be required to prohibit the possession or use of tobacco and the illegal possession or use of drugs or alcohol, in any form, at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored events.

- Promote safety by requiring an individual evaluation of students who bring a firearm to school and continue educational services for these students. The proposal would modify the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) by requiring that students found in possession of a firearm in school be assessed to determine whether they pose an imminent threat of harm to themselves or others. To ensure that these students remain connected to stable supervised environments,

students would have to receive appropriate counseling, supervision, and educational services while they are out of school, and appropriate treatment before they can return to school.

- Strengthen program accountability. State and local recipients of SDFSCA funds would be required to adopt outcome-based performance indicators and to report regularly on their progress. Continuation of local grants would be conditioned upon achievement of satisfactory progress toward meeting performance targets.

  School districts would also have to develop a comprehensive "Safe Schools Plan" to ensure that essential program components are in place and that school efforts are coordinated with related community-based activities.

- Promote healthy habits and physical fitness. Although many of today's students are less active and more overweight than their predecessors, fewer schools are offering comprehensive physical fitness and wellness programs. Recent studies show that nearly half of young people between the ages of 12 and 21 do not regularly exercise vigorously.[4]

  Our proposal would create a grant program to support demonstration projects promoting lifelong physical activity for students through physical fitness education programs. Exemplary physical education programs can promote lifelong healthy habits, provide opportunities for students to connect to school, and support after-school programs.[5]

NOTES

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TITLE V
PROMOTING EQUITY, EXCELLENCE, AND PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

TITLE V, PART A — MAGNET SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Recognizes the importance of diverse learning environments to prepare students to function in our nation's increasingly diverse communities and workplaces;
- Promotes public school choice through the use of magnet schools;
- Emphasizes teacher quality by requiring that instructional staff in magnet programs who are not licensed or certified must demonstrate experience, knowledge, or skills in a relevant field;
- Increases the emphasis on building the capacity to continue magnet programs after federal funding has ended by adding a priority for capacity building, including professional development; and
- Provides technical assistance and information dissemination activities that will help applicants and grantees strengthen their magnet school programs.

From 1972 through 1981, the federal government supported school desegregation efforts through the Emergency School Assistance Program, and subsequently through the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA). Federal support for the planning and implementation of magnet schools began in 1976 under the ESAA. The ESAA program was repealed in 1981, but in 1985 Congress reestablished federal support for magnet schools through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP).

The MSAP provides three-year competitive grants to selected school districts that submit applications designed to:

- Eliminate, reduce, or prevent minority group isolation in targeted schools with substantial percentages of minority students;
- Assist school districts in achieving systemic reforms and help provide all students with the opportunity to meet challenging state content and student performance standards;
- Support the design and development of innovative educational methods and practices; and
- Provide courses of instruction within the magnet schools that strengthen students' knowledge of academic subjects and grasp of marketable vocational skills.

What We've Learned

Since the MSAP's enactment, public school options for children nationwide have dramatically increased. Approximately 1.5 million students are currently enrolled in over 5,200 magnet schools. These magnet schools offer a wide range of choices of distinctive programs that have served as models for school improvement efforts.

Since 1977, the San Diego Unified School District has developed a network of magnet programs in 31 elementary and 14 secondary schools. San Diego has received several MSAP grants to help implement new magnet programs and revitalize older programs. Magnet programs in San Diego are organized around themes such as math and science, technology, visual and performing arts, Montessori methodology, the International Baccalaureate program, foreign language immersion, and medical science.

Despite efforts such as court orders, public schools in America remain largely segregated. More than two-thirds of minority students attend schools consisting of 50 percent or more minority students, and almost half attend schools with 75 percent or more minority students. Isolation for non-minority students is also pronounced: Almost one-third of non-minority students attend schools with less than 10 percent minority students.[1]

Magnet schools have provided their students with the opportunity to learn in a racially diverse environment and to succeed academically. Magnet schools compare favorably with private schools and comprehensive public high schools in producing better student performance.[2] After controlling for preexisting differences among tenth-grade students, magnet schools showed a stronger achievement benefit than other types of schools, with significantly higher achievement in reading, social studies, and science.

Magnet schools funded by MSAP have been instrumental in providing a high-quality public school education to minority children. A study of magnet schools in St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Nashville concluded that students who attended magnet schools probably would not have had comparable educational opportunities without these programs.[3]

Desegregation can also help increase student high school graduation rates and raise aspirations to attend college.[4] For example, some magnet high schools, called "career" magnets, structure their academics around a set of related careers or professions, such as medicine or the law. A study of urban career magnet high schools found that more of the graduates of career magnet high schools planned to go to college than did graduates of the comprehensive schools studied.[5]

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Recognize the importance of promoting diversity by adding new statutory findings and language on diversity to the MSAP's purpose statement. Many schools remain racially, economically, linguistically, or ethnically segregated, and few students with disabilities participate in these schools. The MSAP can provide students with a valuable experience that prepares them to function in a diverse society, and with a higher quality of education than is generally found in segregated settings.

- Recognize magnet schools' role in increasing public school choices by revising MSAP's purpose statement.

- Emphasize capacity-building activities. School districts would be able to use MSAP funds for capacity-building activities, including professional development, without statutory restrictions on amounts. Our proposal would also create a new statutory priority for capacity-building plans to further emphasize the importance of well-conceived, high-quality capacity-building activities in ensuring the continued operation of magnet programs after MSAP funds end.

- Increase the quality of the instructional staff who are employed in magnet school projects. To supplement licensed or certified teachers, the MSAP permits employment of other instructional staff necessary to support the school's instructional program, such as performing artists, doctors, or lawyers. To help ensure that staff are qualified, our proposal would require that they demonstrate expertise, knowledge, or skills in the subject matter of instruction or in a relevant field.

- Add flexibility to the MSAP to support technical assistance and dissemination of information activities. Our proposal would permit the MSAP to use up to 5 percent of its appropriations for evaluation, technical assistance, and dissemination of information. Previously, the MSAP had no authority for technical assistance or the collection and dissemination of information on successful magnet school programs.

- Drop statutory priorities for Need for Assistance and Comprehensive Community Involvement Plans because they have not proved effective in selecting the recipients of MSAP awards.

- Repeal Innovative Programs from the MSAP. The activities supported by Innovative Programs are being incorporated into Part C of this Title: the new OPTIONS (Opportunities To Improve Our Nation's Public Schools) program.

TITLE V, PART B — PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the commitment to the Public Charter Schools Program (PCSP), and moves it from Title X to Title V to locate it with other public school choice programs;
- The PCSP was reauthorized in October 1998 under the "Charter School Expansion Act." The Charter School Expansion Act:
  - Created incentives for states to implement policies that will increase the number of charter schools, as well as strengthen the accountability and flexibility of their charter schools;
  - Created new dissemination subgrants to fund existing efforts of high-quality charter schools' to help other groups create new schools and to provide technical assistance to other public schools that are attempting to implement lessons learned in the charter school;
  - Ensured that every charter school receives the federal funding for which it is eligible within the first five months of operation or within five months of an expansion of its enrollment; and
  - Increased states' responsibility to assist and promote charter schools by requiring more information from states in their grant applications.

The Public Charter Schools Program (PCSP) helps teachers, parents, and local communities to design and implement charter schools. The PCSP makes competitive grants to states that have specific charter school laws. States, in turn, make subgrants to authorized public chartering agencies in partnership with charter school developers. If an eligible state elects not to participate, or if its application for funding is not approved, the PCSP may make grants directly to eligible local partnerships. All charter schools receiving PCSP funds are public schools and are subject to applicable federal requirements, including civil rights laws and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

In 1991, Minnesota became the first state to pass legislation authorizing charter schools, followed by California in 1992 and four other states in 1993. Federal support for charter schools was first legislated in the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. Since 1995, the PCSP has supported the development of approximately 900 new charter schools.

An eligible partnership receiving a PCSP grant or subgrant may use the funds for planning, designing, and implementing the charter school, including acquiring equipment, materials, and supplies and other start-up costs that cannot be met from state and local sources.

The new demonstration subgrants can be awarded to charter schools that have been open for at least three consecutive years and have demonstrated success in improving student achievement, maintaining high levels of parental satisfaction, and achieving other measures of school quality. Grantees would use these funds to assist other schools in adapting the charter school's program, or to disseminate information about the charter school through activities such as technical assistance, partnerships, curriculum materials, and evaluations that document the successful practices of the charter school's program.

What We've Learned

The PCSP has successfully supported nearly three-fourths of all operating charter schools and an even larger proportion of charter schools in the planning stages. Charter schools that receive funding from PCSP have received $60,000 per year on average.[6] It is too early to tell whether nationwide charter schools have improved student achievement. However, preliminary findings and anecdotal evidence suggest mixed results, in part reflecting the vastly different compositions of charter school student bodies within and across states and the relatively new status of these schools.

The characteristics of students attending public charter schools are similar to the overall makeup of students attending other public schools in their district. The percentage of students attending charter schools who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is roughly equivalent to that of students enrolled in all public schools: slightly more than a third.[7] About one in 10 students in both charter schools and other public schools have limited English proficiency (LEP). However, there is significant variation across states in the percentage of LEP students in charter schools, compared with the percentage in all public schools in the state. Charter schools serve a somewhat smaller proportion of students with disabilities (8 percent) compared to the percentage served in all public schools (11 percent).[8] Student demographics in more than 70 percent of charter schools are within 20 percent of their district's breakdown by race. Of the charter schools that have a significantly different population from that of their district, most serve higher proportions of minority students than their districts do. However, minority enrollments vary considerably by state.[9]

Charter schools typically educate children in smaller settings than other public schools. The National Study of Charter Schools reports that charter schools tend to be smaller than their traditional public school counterparts. More than 60 percent of charter schools enrolled fewer than 200 students in 1997-98, compared with just 17 percent of all public schools.[10] The median enrollment in all charter schools is 132, compared with 486 students in all public schools. In newly created charter schools, the median enrollment is even lower (111 students).

Fenton Avenue Charter School is a year-round elementary (K-5) conversion charter school that serves an ethnically diverse and economically disadvantaged population of over 1,300 students. Located in the Lake View Terrace area of Los Angeles, 85 percent of the school's students are eligible for Title I services, 62 percent have limited English proficiency, and 17 percent are students with disabilities. Prior to becoming a charter, this San Fernando Valley school consistently ranked among the lowest-achieving schools in the region. After converting to charter status in 1994, the school steadily improved its instructional program. In May 1997, the school was named a California Distinguished School.

With respect to student assessments, state laws treat charter schools essentially the same as other public schools. According to the National Study of Charter Schools, charter schools often use multiple assessments such as performance-based assessments and student portfolios to determine student progress, in addition to required statewide assessments.[11]

A 1998 University of California at Berkeley study of the impact of charter schools on their districts found that almost one-quarter of the districts studied had significantly altered their educational programs in response to the advent of charters. The other districts had responded to charters more slowly and in less significant ways.[12]

What We Propose

The Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 has already reauthorized the Public Charter Schools Program. Other than moving the PCSP program into Title V to promote equity, excellence, and public school choice, we are proposing no additional changes.

TITLE V, PART C — OPTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Reaffirms the federal commitment to public education and to the goal of helping all students achieve to high standards, including poor and minority students and students with disabilities and limited English proficiency;
- Increases federal support for public school choice through new competitive OPTIONS grants;
- Targets funding to high-poverty school districts through a statutory priority; and
- Promotes public school choice as an important vehicle for implementing standards-based reform in public school districts.

Public school choice gives students high-quality educational options to meet their individual needs, and it gives parents new opportunities to hold schools accountable for helping their children meet high academic standards.

There is already a great deal of variety and innovation in public education at the local level that provides choices for parents and students. Most states provide some options in public education, such as open enrollment and controlled-choice programs, dual enrollment programs that pair high schools and community colleges, charter schools, and magnet schools. However, states vary dramatically in the ways they provide choices and in the availability of choices to all students, and some states have no statewide policy to provide choices within public schools.

Currently, the federal government supports public school choice primarily through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program and the Public Charter School Program. Through the new OPTIONS authority, we hope to increase the high-quality educational choices available to students nationwide by promoting the development of new and different educational options, including new courses and academic programs in existing public schools.

What We've Learned

Public school choice is increasingly available in school districts across the nation. In 1993, 11 percent of public school students in grades 3 through 12 attended a public school that was chosen by their parents.[13] This number rose to about 15 percent of students by 1996.[14] In recent years, many more public school options have been created. There is evidence that disadvantaged students have less access than other students to high-quality public school options.[15] However,

well-designed public school choice has great promise as a tool for increasing equity and excellence in education.

Public schools of choice can create distinctive approaches or special emphases. Students learn in different ways; some students are hands-on learners, some thrive in group-learning situations, and others need more one-on-one attention. Recognizing that no one school or program can meet the special needs of every student, public school choice gives students and families the flexibility to choose among public schools and programs with different educational settings, teaching strategies, and academic emphases.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, has a controlled-choice plan, which allows students to apply to attend any public school in the district, regardless of where they live. The parents typically pick three to five schools, and efforts are made to ensure that every child is assigned on the basis of those preferences. In addition to this controlled-choice plan, each elementary school has a special theme or focus, such as multiculturalism, Core Knowledge, or project-based learning. The high schools offer several academic options or focuses for students, such as individualized learning, leadership, and technology.

Public school choice can also increase access to high-quality academic courses and programs for all students.

Minnesota's postsecondary enrollment option is an excellent example of how schools are working as partners with community organizations to provide new and more rigorous options for students. Across the state, high school juniors and seniors may take courses, full or part-time, at community colleges or universities for high school credit. This option provides a greater variety of courses for students and the opportunity to pursue more challenging coursework than is available in the high school. The institutions of higher education establish their own admissions requirements, and the tuition, fees, and required textbooks are provided at no cost to the students.

In addition, public schools of choice often promote increased parental involvement. When parents, students, and teachers choose their schools, their commitment to the school is increased, the school has a more focused and cohesive environment, and the school can be more effective. Studies demonstrate that students experience greater success when one or more parents are actively involved in their schooling experience. In two-parent families, students in grade 1 through 12 are more likely to get mostly A's and to enjoy school, and are less likely to repeat a grade, if both parents are engaged in their child's education. The same results are found in one-parent families if that parent is involved in the educational process.[16]

At the Downtown School in Des Moines, businesses are working as partners with the school district to help increase parental involvement and develop world-class schools. Located in an office space that is financed jointly by 19 local businesses, this public "work-site school" serves children of the employees of these businesses; about 10 percent of the students come to the school from neighboring suburbs through an open enrollment policy. The school uses a number of research-based strategies for serving young children, such as parental involvement and communication, small class size, an integrated curriculum, multiage classes, experience-based learning, an extended school year, and portfolio assessments.

The Downtown School is promoting parental involvement, decreasing employee absenteeism, and producing strong student achievement results. More than 80 percent of the school's eight-year-olds and 92 percent of the seven-year-olds scored above the district average on standardized performance-based math assessments during the 1996-97 school year. The Downtown School has been recognized nationally for its contribution to the education and business communities. It has a waiting list of more than 250 students.

What Is Well-Designed Public School Choice?

This includes any approach to improving teaching and learning that:

- Provides new, different, high-quality choices to families and students in public schools — choices in educational courses, activities, programs, or schools — to better meet their different learning styles, interests, and needs;
- Holds schools and programs accountable to the public for results;
- Stimulates educational innovation for the continuous improvement of all public schools; contributes to standards-based school reform efforts; and promotes high expectations and high achievement for all students;
- Results in options that are voluntary and accessible to all students, including those who are poor, are minority, or have limited English proficiency or disabilities;
- Promotes educational equity and increases opportunities for students to receive the educational benefits that diversity provides; and
- Increases family involvement in the education of their children.

What We Propose

Every family deserves high-quality public school options that meet their children's needs. Federal leadership in this area can help ensure that the rapidly growing public school choice movement will help reduce inequities, not increase them, and will provide high-quality educational options that are truly accessible to all students.

To help ensure that public school choice contributes to excellence and equity for all children, OPTIONS: The Opportunities To Improve Our Nation's Schools program would encourage the development of high-quality public school choice across the nation. OPTIONS would promote choices that would benefit all students, not just a few, and that would contribute to districtwide school improvement efforts. In addition, OPTIONS would reduce barriers to effective choice, create new diverse learning environments, and help decrease the isolation of students by racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Support innovative approaches to high-quality public school choice through new OPTIONS competitive grants, available for up to three years. The grants would support the demonstration, development, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of information about public school choice projects that stimulate educational innovation and improvement in all schools and contribute to standards-based reform efforts, including public schools at work sites or on college campuses, or options for postsecondary enrollment under this new authority. Districts and states could apply for grants that would fund choice activities designed to:
  - Strengthen neighborhood and community schools by enabling them to provide new choices of courses, instructional strategies, or other options that respond to community needs;
  - Promote collaborations between exemplary choice schools and other public schools to stimulate continuous, broad-based improvement in teaching and learning;
  - Develop new strategies for overcoming barriers to effective public school choice;
  - Create new opportunities for diverse learning environments; and
  - Develop and disseminate information about effective public school choice programs.

- Target funds to high-poverty school districts through a statutory priority.

- Require clear performance indicators and an evaluation for each project to ensure that individual schools, school districts, and states are held accountable to the public for results.

- Replace and expand the Innovative Programs activity in the current magnet schools statute by supporting innovative approaches to school desegregation and other efforts to create diverse learning environments through public school choice.

TITILE V, PART D — WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the national commitment to promoting gender equity in education; and
- Increases flexibility by eliminating the requirement that two-thirds of the total program appropriations be used to support implementation grants, allowing funds for much-needed technical assistance and new, model equity programs.

The Women's Education Equity Act (WEEA) program was enacted in 1974 to promote educational equity for women and girls, including those who experience discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or age.

WEEA supports research and development activities to help schools implement long-term, institution-wide practices and policies to support gender equity. Among many efforts, grants encourage women and girls to participate in academic fields and careers in which they have been traditionally underrepresented. WEEA grants also support research and development of model teacher training programs, gender-equitable curricula, and other gender-sensitive educational materials. WEEA also provides funds to help educational agencies and institutions meet Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs receiving federal funds.

What We've Learned

The WEEA resource center, supported by federal funds, provides guidance to educators, other technical assistance providers, and the public on gender-related topics, such as gender equity awareness; Title IX; sexual harassment; support for adolescent girls; and instructional improvements in math, science, and technology. In addition, the center is currently developing on-line math courses for middle-school girls.

Steadily increasing numbers of school districts are seeking materials and technical assistance related to gender equity issues. Requests for information from the center have more than doubled since 1994, to over 7,000, and the center's Web site was visited 300,000 times in 1998.

Under the current law, WEEA must use two-thirds of its total appropriation — $3 million in fiscal year 1999 — to support implementation projects. As a result, it is difficult to meet the increasing demand for gender equity technical assistance and the development of new, model equity programs.

What We Propose

To ensure that all women and girls have full and equal access to all educational and career opportunities, our proposal continues support for projects that develop research materials and resources, and provide technical assistance to ensure gender equity in education.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Increase the effort to fund more technical assistance and research projects to meet the growing public demand, by eliminating the statutory requirement that two-thirds of the total appropriation support implementation projects.

NOTES

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TITLE VI
CLASS-SIZE REDUCTION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the President's commitment to hiring 100,000 teachers to reduce class sizes in the early grades by maintaining the Class-Size Reduction initiative created in the fall of 1998;
- Helps communities sustain their class-size reduction efforts by establishing a local matching requirement, but exempts high-poverty school districts from this requirement; and
- Creates new flexibility for school districts who receive grants that are less than a starting teacher's salary.

In recognition of the compelling research showing that smaller class sizes help improve student achievement, last year Congress established the Class-Size Reduction initiative and appropriated $1.2 billion to hire approximately 30,000 teachers. The program legislation emphasizes the importance of highly qualified teachers: A portion of each school district's allocation may be spent for professional development activities for new and current teaching staff.

What We've Learned

Research and common sense suggest that children benefit from the additional attention they receive in small classes. Smaller classes are especially important in the early grades, where they can help all children learn to read well — increasing their ability to succeed in advanced subjects and later grades — and for disadvantaged and minority students, who show the greatest achievement gains from small classes.

Smaller class sizes increase student achievement. A recent analysis of the findings from the most carefully designed studies on class size found that reducing class size led to substantial gains in student achievement.[1] The study of Tennessee's Project STAR found that students in smaller classes in grades K-3 earned significantly higher scores in basic skills tests in all four years and in all types of schools.[2] A follow-up study found that students from smaller classes continued to outperform their peers in all academic subjects even after returning to larger classes in the fourth grade, with significantly higher achievement levels persisting through high school.[3]

A recent report on the Wisconsin SAGE program found that reducing class sizes to 15 students in grades K-3 resulted in significantly higher achievement levels for first-graders and continuing gains for second-graders in math, reading, and language arts. Across the United States, an

analysis of data on 10,000 fourth-graders and 10,000 eighth-graders found that students in smaller classes performed better than comparable students in larger classes.[4]

Smaller classes have the greatest effect on disadvantaged and minority students. A review of more than 100 separate studies found that "the research rather consistently finds that students who are economically disadvantaged or from some ethnic minorities perform better academically in small classes."[5] Similarly, the Wisconsin study found the largest gains for black students, and the national study of fourth- and eighth-graders found the greatest effect of smaller classes for inner-city youth.

Smaller classes reduce discipline problems and increase instructional time. When Burke County, North Carolina, reduced class sizes, the percentage of classroom time devoted to instruction increased from 80 percent to 86 percent. Students from Tennessee's STAR program worked harder and caused fewer discipline problems than students from larger classes — even after the STAR students returned to large classrooms.

Smaller classes with well-prepared teachers make a difference. Smaller classes will boost student achievement the most when teachers are prepared to teach well in these classes. Positive effects of smaller classes are more likely if teachers change their instructional methods and classroom procedures in the smaller classes. Class-size reduction efforts resulting in student achievement gains in Wisconsin and North Carolina included a strong focus on professional development for teachers.

What We Propose

Our proposal for reauthorization would continue the President's commitment to reducing class size in the early grades by extending the Class-Size Reduction initiative. The initiative allocates funds to states for distribution to all school districts according to the statutory formula. School districts can use the funds to recruit, hire, and train additional teachers; assess teacher skills; and engage teachers in professional development activities.

To improve the Class-Size Reduction initiative, the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Clearly state the purpose of the initiative: Reducing class size in grades 1-3 to an average of 18 students per regular classroom and improving teaching so that all students learn to read independently and well by the end of third grade.

- Require a substantive state application that describes the state's goals for reducing class sizes in grades 1-3, the state's plan for allocating program funds, and how the state will use other funds to reduce class size and improve teacher quality and reading achievement.

- Permit states to set-aside up to 1 percent of state allocation for administering the program.

- Create specific statutory flexibility for small school districts whose allocations of Class-Size Reduction funds are less than a starting teacher's salary. These districts will be able to:
  - Form a consortium with one or more other school districts;
  - Supplement their allocation from this program with other funds in order to hire a full- or part-time teacher; or
  - Use grants of less than $10,000 entirely for professional development related to teaching smaller classes.

- Require a local match to help communities sustain their class-size reduction efforts. Districts would be required to fund up to 35 percent of activities under this program with non-federal funds. This matching requirement would not apply to school districts with child-poverty levels of greater than 50 percent. Experience shows that requiring recipients to commit their own resources through a matching requirement can help ensure that programs continue after federal funding expires.

NOTES

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[2] Word, E., Johnston, J., Bain, H., Fulton, D., Boyd-Zaharias, J., Achilles, C., Lintz, M., Folger, J., & Breda, C. (1990). *The state of Tennessee's Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Project: Technical report: 1985-1990.*

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TITLE VII
THE BILINGUAL EDUCATION ACT

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Emphasizes the importance of ensuring that students with limited English proficiency (LEP) learn English and reach the same challenging academic standards as all other children;
- Improves the quality of professional development and teacher education programs supported by the ESEA to help LEP students progress toward high academic standards;
- Requires programs to administer annual assessments of English language proficiency;
- Helps local school districts that have rapidly expanding numbers of LEP students and schools that have little experience in serving LEP students teach these students to high standards by establishing a competitive priority for these districts;
- Strengthens program accountability by (1) giving priority to districts with track records of success; (2) requiring more specific data in the grant application; (3) requiring annual evaluation reports to better measure progress and determine grant continuation; and, (4) requiring grantees to meet program objectives or carry out an improvement plan in order to receive continued funding;
- Empowers families of LEP children by requiring grantees to give parents clear program descriptions and information about their right to withdraw their children from a Title VII program at any time; and
- Promotes learning of a second language by continuing the funding priority for programs that develop proficiency in more than one language.

The Bilingual Education Act assists states, school districts, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations in developing and implementing quality instructional programs for linguistically diverse students as part of standards-based education reforms. In 1998, over one million students were served by Title VII programs.

What We've Learned

The number of LEP students in our nation's schools is large and growing. Between 1990 and 1997, the number of LEP students increased by 57 percent, to roughly 3.4 million.[1]

LEP students and their families are increasingly living in places that have not previously served large numbers of LEP students. Between 1989-90 and 1996-97, the LEP population more than doubled in 18 states: Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington.[2]

LEP students arrive at their schools at various ages and often with little or no prior formal schooling. Twelve percent of LEP students in middle school and 20 percent in high school have missed more than two years of schooling since age six. Twenty-three percent of LEP students have limited skills in their native language.[3]

A 1998 National Research Council report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, concluded that LEP students should be taught to read first in their native language. If native-language instruction is impossible because of a lack of materials or resources, the report recommended that LEP should attain some fluency in oral English before they receive formal reading instruction in English.[4]

In 1998, 54 percent of all teachers taught LEP or culturally diverse students, yet only 20 percent felt very well prepared to meet the needs of these students.[5]

What We Propose

One of America's greatest strengths is its diversity. Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to succeed is a central purpose of the ESEA. However, the dramatic demographic changes that our schools have witnessed over the last several years have created new challenges to teaching and learning. Our proposal for reauthorization will sharpen the focus on helping all students with limited English proficiency learn English and achieve to high standards.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Emphasize the importance of helping LEP students learn English. Under both Title I and Title VII, schools would be required to annually administer assessments of student progress in developing English proficiency. The test results would be used to improve instruction and inform parents about student progress.

- Help ensure that all teachers are well-trained to teach LEP students. Because the number of students with limited English proficiency is increasing in all classrooms, the proposal would help develop teachers' ability to teach LEP students, both through teacher education programs for new and prospective teachers and through professional development for current teachers.

  — The Bilingual Education Teachers and Personnel Grants would improve the capacity of teacher education programs to prepare prospective teachers to serve LEP students effectively. Grantees not only train new teachers of English as a second language and bilingual teachers, but would also work with other teacher education programs to improve coursework and support training to help all new teachers better serve LEP students.

— The Training for All Teachers program would provide ongoing, intensive professional development aligned to the same principles of high-quality professional development described in Title II.

— Finally, our proposal would authorize grants to develop and implement career ladder programs to help paraprofessionals without baccalaureate degrees earn those degrees and become certified bilingual educators.

- Create incentives for successful programs by authorizing a priority for grant applicants with demonstrated effectiveness in helping LEP students learn English and achieve to high standards. In addition, under Title VII, the Secretary would be authorized to make Academic Excellence Awards to allow states to recognize districts that have made significant progress in reaching these goals.

- Strengthen program accountability for the achievement of LEP students. Schools and districts would be accountable both for helping LEP students learn English and for helping LEP students master the same challenging state academic standards as all other students. Title VII grantees would be required to submit specific, baseline data in the grant application and provide annual, rather than biennial, performance reports on student progress. At the end of second year of an award, projects that failed to demonstrate continuous and substantial progress would be required to submit a plan for project improvement for the Secretary's review. If grantees failed to make improvements after implementing the new plan, the Secretary would terminate the grant.

- Assist local school districts with rapidly growing numbers of LEP students. Some states and communities with little experience in serving LEP students have been strained by rapidly growing LEP populations. The proposal authorizes a competitive priority for school districts with these needs.

- Require schools to provide clear program descriptions to families of LEP children and inform them of their option to withdraw their children from the Title VII program at any time.

- Promote learning of a second language. Our proposal would continue to give priority to Title VII applications that would develop proficiency in more than one language and require that applicants have a plan to support their program after the grant period ends.

NOTES

[1] Council of Chief State School Officers. (1998). *State education indicators with a focus on Title I.* Washington, DC: Author.
[2]Council of Chief State School Officers. (1998). *State education indicators with a focus on Title I.* Washington, DC: Author.
[3] U.S. Department of Education. (1993). *Descriptive study of services to limited English proficient students.* Washington, DC:Author.
[4] Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
[5] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *Teacher quality: A report on the preparation and qualifications of public school teachers.* Washington, DC: Author.

TITLE VIII
IMPACT AID

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Simplifies the funding formula and concentrates federal funds on school districts most genuinely burdened by federal activities, such as districts that include Indian lands or educate the children of families who live on military bases and thus do not pay local property taxes;
- Eliminates payments for children who either live on federal property or whose parents work on federal property (but not both), often referred to as "b" children;
- Updates school districts' eligibility for "Payments for Federal Property" by considering the current value of federal property;
- Encourages more effective participation by parents of American Indian children; and
- Prevents states from withholding necessary aid from districts by requiring states to meet a minimum per-pupil expenditure before reducing state grants to school districts receiving Impact Aid.

First enacted in 1950, the Impact Aid program compensates school districts for Federal burdens on their resources due to:

- The presence of federally connected students in their schools. Because communities may not tax federal lands, federal activity — such as a military base — may increase the number of students that a school district must educate without generating sufficient tax revenue to support their education. The Impact Aid program recognizes two categories of federally-connected children:
  - "a" children, who (1) live on Indian lands or (2) live on federal property *and* have parents who work on Federal property or are in the uniformed services; and
  - "b" children, who either live on federal property or have parents who work on federal property, but not both.
- Federal ownership of local property. Federal property, such as military bases, national parks, and government offices, is tax-exempt and therefore may reduce school districts' tax revenue.

What We've Learned

Approximately 1,500 school districts nationwide receive Basic Support Payments on behalf of federally connected children. Many of these school districts depend on Impact Aid for a significant portion of their general operating expenses. In a few districts, Impact Aid accounts for more than 50 percent of the school district's budget. However, the current payment formula is excessively complex and does not concentrate federal resources to help school districts genuinely burdened by the presence of federally connected children.

Funding formula. School districts are eligible for Basic Support Payments if they have 400 federally connected students or if at least 3 percent of the average total daily attendance is federally connected. The Basic Support Payment formula computes the maximum allowable payment multiplying the districts "weighted child count" by the highest of four figures: (1) one-half of the national average per-pupil expenditure for education, (2) one-half of the state average per-pupil expenditure, (3) the local share of the per-pupil expenditure of comparable school districts in the state, or (4) the average local share of the per-pupil expenditure in the state.

The first two of these options assume that one-half of education funding derives from the local level, an assumption that has no factual basis. These options inequitably shift funds away from districts that contribute more local revenue for education toward districts with comparatively little local tax effort.

An additional inequity results from payments for children formerly referred to as "b" children, who impose relatively little financial burden on their school districts. Most "b" children have parents who work on federal property, but live on non-federal property and thus pay local property taxes that support the public schools. Payments to school districts for "b" children divert scarce funding from school districts that educate "a" children. In fiscal 1999, the federal government will pay about $61 million on behalf of nearly 1 million "b" children.

If appropriations are insufficient to make full payments, the law requires payments to be reduced in accordance with the district's percentage of federally connected students plus the percentage of its total budget that would be accounted for by full funding of its Impact Aid grant. In effect, this formula benefits school districts that choose to reduce local taxes and spend less on education, because Impact Aid represents a larger portion of these districts' overall budget.

American Indian students. Because children living on Indian lands are among the federally connected children identified in the statute, Basic Support Payments provide about $300 million annually to promote educational opportunity for American Indian children, making it the largest single source of federal education assistance for public schools serving Indian lands (other than Bureau of Indian Affairs support for tribal schools). Many of these school districts serve exceptionally poor communities.

School districts responsible for children living on Indian lands must consult with the American Indian community concerning those children's education. However, some members of the Indian

community have expressed concern about whether Indian children have benefited fully and equally from school programs partially funded by Impact Aid.[1]

Value of federal property. Approximately 240 local school districts are eligible for Section 8002 Payments for Federal Property. This authority compensates eligible school districts for revenue lost because of the removal of federal property from local tax rolls. Two-thirds of these Section 8002 recipients also receive Basic Support Payments. Only federal property acquired after 1938 is eligible for compensation, but there is no longer a clear rationale for this particular cutoff date. Many local communities have adapted to the original loss of the federal property through development and the appreciation of the remaining tax base. In some instances, the federal presence may have helped to increase local property values, thereby expanding the local tax base.[2]

School construction. Under Section 8007, Impact Aid also provides funds for school construction and renovation. Some public school facilities serving Indian lands are in extremely poor condition. These school districts have very little ability to raise revenue for capital improvements because of their limited tax base.[3] For these districts, Section 8007 is the most viable source of revenue for school construction.

State offsets of Impact Aid funds. Section 8009 of the ESEA authorizes states with relatively equal per-pupil spending levels across school districts to withhold state funds to offset Impact Aid payments, as do Alaska, Kansas, and New Mexico. However, the law does not consider the adequacy of the education funding provided by a state program. Several school districts have challenged their state's right to reduce its grants to Impact Aid districts because they believe that their state provides inadequate support for public education; as a result, they argue, reducing state aid to districts to offset Impact Aid further denies school districts the resources they need to provide acceptable educational services and facilities.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence Act of 1999 would:

- Simplify the funding formula under Section 8003 and concentrate federal funds on school districts most genuinely burdened by federal activities. Our proposal would create a simpler, more equitable formula for Basic Support Payments on behalf of "a" children and eliminate all payments on behalf of "b" children. Our proposal would also eliminate the student eligibility threshold, so that districts that currently rely on the number of "b" children to reach the threshold will continue to be eligible to receive payments on behalf of "a" children.

- More closely reflect the cost of educating federally connected students by basing school districts' funding on the highest of three factors, the first two of which are in current law: (1) the local share the of per-pupil expenditures of comparable districts in the state; (2) the average local share the of per-pupil expenditure in the state; or (3) the national per-pupil expenditure, multiplied by share of expenditures in the state that comes from local resources.

- More fairly allocate limited funds when appropriations are insufficient to make full payments. Unlike current law, our proposal would consistently help districts with high proportions of federally connected children, which face disproportionately high federally connected burdens. Specifically, our proposal calculates funds distribution on the basis of the following formula: 50 percent plus one-half of the percentage of a district's students who are federally connected.

- Update payments for federal property under Section 8002 to provide payments to school districts where federal property has a current assessed value that is at least 10 percent of the total assessed value of all property in the school district. This provision would ensure that payments are made only to school districts in which the presence of federal property continues to reduce the local tax base significantly.

- Strengthen the Indian Community Participation requirements in Section 8004. These requirements ensure that the Indian children counted under Impact Aid can participate in programs and activities on an equal basis with all other children, and that the parents of Indian children and Indian tribes have the opportunity to present their views on the needs of the children and the programs to be implemented. Our proposal would require districts to implement these provisions using the local Indian Education (Title IX) parent committee. It would also ensure that they comply with the parental involvement provisions of Title I, as those provisions relate to the needs of Indian children and parents. Both of these changes would help ensure appropriate consultation with representatives of the Indian community on the education of Indian children.

- Focus construction funds on school districts serving substantial numbers of children living on Indian lands, and require a 50 percent match from state or local sources to address the inadequate school facilities that hinder the education of Indian children.

- Prevent states from withholding aid that districts need by adding a minimum funding requirement to the equalization standard in Section 8009. Any state seeking permission to offset Impact Aid in its state formula would be required to demonstrate that the average per-pupil expenditure in the state is at least 80 percent of the national average, as well as meet the disparity standard in today's law.

NOTES

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TITLE IX
INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE, AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

TITLE IX, PART A — INDIAN EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the commitment to the Indian Education program, which helps American Indian and Alaska Native students achieve to high academic standards;
- Addresses the special needs of these students by supporting research-based, culturally appropriate educational services;
- Promotes high-quality professional development by encouraging collaborations among tribal colleges, other institutions of higher education, and school districts serving Indian students to prepare American Indian teachers and teachers of American Indian students to help all students reach high standards;
- Encourages local schools to incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices and learning strategies into their educational programs; and
- Reduces tribal schools' administrative burden by giving them greater flexibility in documenting eligible students.

Many states and school districts are challenged to deliver American Indian and Alaska Native students a high-quality education that helps them reach challenging performance standards and acknowledges these students' special cultures and communities.

Current law authorizes formula grants to school districts and federally funded schools. The formula grants help provide such services as tutoring, native language and culture instruction, and guidance counseling to 460,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students.[1]

The law also authorizes discretionary grants to universities, states, school districts, and Indian organizations for demonstration and professional development projects. The fiscal year 1999 appropriation for these programs will support eight grants to train approximately 270 Indians to become teachers and administrators and additional grants to improve early childhood educational opportunities for Indian children.[2]

What We've Learned

Because American Indian and Alaska Native students represent a small share of the student population, they — and the schools and staff that serve them — are often overlooked in national education studies. However, we can accurately describe the basic characteristics of these students and their schools, teachers, and principals.[3]

About 1 percent of the nation's K-12 students are American Indians or Alaska Natives. Students in schools with high Indian enrollment, including those run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian tribes, are more likely to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and to participate in Title I programs than are students in other public schools.[4] These schools are also more likely to report high levels of poverty, parental alcoholism, and lack of parental involvement as serious problems, although the percentage of schools reporting these problems decreased between 1991 and 1994.

Since 1992, the performance of Indian and Alaska Native fourth- and eighth-graders on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has improved in math, but declined in reading. (Too few Indian twelfth-graders took the exam in 1992 to permit a meaningful comparison across time.)

A 1997 evaluation of the plans of Indian Education grant recipients concluded that they should integrate Indian education programs into a whole-school, standards-based reform effort and increase the participation of the American Indian community.[5]

President Clinton's 1998 executive order on educational opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives established an interagency task force to develop a coordinated federal response to help these students. The task force is developing an interagency guide to programs and resources, establishing a research agenda, and supporting pilot programs to improve technical assistance.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Encourage public schools to incorporate culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies into their educational programs.

- Improve the quality of teaching by supporting professional development consortia to train current teachers to meet the needs of Indian students, using the best available research-based teaching and learning strategies. The legislation would encourage collaborations among tribally controlled colleges, other institutions of higher education, and school districts serving substantial numbers of Indian students.

- Create new flexibility for tribal schools by allowing them to determine student enrollment through the standard student eligibility requirements met by public schools, rather than the BIA certification process, if they so choose.

- Support curriculum development, standards-based reform, and gifted and talented programs to help all students achieve to high standards.

TITLE IX, PARTS B AND C — NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Increases the flexibility of the education programs for Native Hawaiians (Part B) and Alaska Natives (Part C), and focuses on the unique academic and cultural needs of these groups, by simplifying and streamlining the legislation governing these programs.

The education programs for the Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native populations were created in recognition of the special educational and cultural needs of Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native students.

Since 1989, the federal government has funded discretionary grants for Native Hawaiian education programs to improve student achievement through activities such as establishing parent and community education centers, developing a wide array of culturally related curricula and materials that address Native Hawaiian learning, and funding a fellowship and community service program for undergraduate and graduate students.

Since 1995, the federal government has funded similar discretionary grants for Alaska Native education programs. These grants have supported activities such as developing curricula, training teachers, helping parents prepare their preschool children to learn, and providing enrichment to talented Alaska Native students in math and science.

What We've Learned

Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians face special educational obstacles. Alaska Natives generally have low performance and high dropout rates, and are significantly underrepresented among holders of baccalaureate degrees in Alaska.[6]

Native Hawaiian eighth-grade students scored at the 24th percentile on the 1992 Reading Comprehensive Sub-test of the Stanford Assessment. A 1993 study found that one-third of Native Hawaiian adults are "functionally illiterate." Native Hawaiian preschool students score among the lowest on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised, an assessment used to measure educational readiness for elementary school instruction.[7]

Current law specifies seven separate Native Hawaiian Education authorities and three Alaska Native authorities. These education programs have supported innovative and effective programs that are tailored to the special needs of the populations they serve. The discretionary grant programs allow the Department to support small and intensive programs that reach out to native students and their families.

South East Regional Resource Center (SERRC) received a three-year Alaska Native Student Enrichment Program grant in 1997. SERRC provides three week-long residential retreats in science enrichment for rural Alaska Native students entering village high schools, helping them succeed in high school science and mathematics. The program also fosters community-based problem-solving partnerships for young children.

In the past few years, it has often been difficult for the Department to meet the changing needs of the Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native populations. The high degree of specificity in the statute, which describes in detail seven authorized uses for Native Hawaiian funds and three for Alaska Native funds, has constrained the Department's ability to effectively administer the programs.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Simplify and streamline the authorities for the programs, while maintaining their focus on the special academic and cultural needs of these populations, by creating a single, broad authority for each program.

NOTES

[1] U.S. Department of Education. (1999). *Justifications of appropriations estimates to the Congress, fiscal year 2000, Indian education.* Washington, DC: Author. P. 8.
[2] U.S. Department of Education. (1999). *Justifications of appropriations estimates to the Congress, fiscal year 2000, Indian education.* Washington, DC: Author. P. 18.
[3] Pavel, D.M., & Curtin, T.R. (1997). *Characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native education: Results from the 1990-91 and 1993-94 schools and staffing survey.* NCES 97-451. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
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[5] Walking Eagle, K., Gonzales, M., & Pechman, E. (1997). *Improving education for Indian students in the context of education reform: Challenges and obstacles.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Undersecretary.
[6] Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. Section 9302.
[7] Kamehameha Schools Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate, Office of Program Evaluation and Planning. (1993). *Native Hawaiian educational assessment 1993.* Honolulu, Author.

TITLE X
PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

TITLE X, PART A — FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Strengthens the emphasis on evaluation of projects receiving funds for demonstration purposes and on the dissemination of project outcomes;
- Broadens opportunities to support innovative character education programs by increasing flexibility in making awards; and
- Helps programs become self-sustaining by establishing a matching requirement.

The Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) supports projects that use innovative educational approaches to improve teaching and learning. FIE supports the identification and dissemination of particularly effective practices used by these projects to serve as models for other programs. In fiscal year 1998, FIE supported 128 grants and a number of other interagency agreements and contracts.

Among the programs supported through FIE competitions is the Blue Ribbon Schools program, which identifies and gives public recognition to exemplary public and private schools throughout the United States. FIE also supports the Department's character education initiative, which helps children learn basic American values and the difference between right and wrong. Character education reinforces and encourages young people to make values like honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, justice, and trustworthiness part of their daily lives. Strong character education programs improve school discipline and student behavior, build stronger links with parents, and help to create an academic setting that improves achievement as well.

What We've Learned

In fiscal 1998, the FIE supported a wide variety of activities to stimulate reform and improve teaching and learning, such as a set of projects to improve mathematics education in the middle grades, a major initiative to help schools in the District of Columbia, and a number of local initiatives to link technology and the arts.

More information is needed on each project's goals, objectives, and results, however, to ensure that they are aligned with performance indicators for FIE. To fulfill its demonstration purpose,

FIE should also gather more information on lessons learned from the projects and disseminate it nationally.

Over the past five years, one of the major programs that the Department has supported under FIE are Character Education Pilot projects, which have been implemented in 28 states. States, in partnership with identified school districts, are developing and implementing promising programs to promote character development in our schools. Under the program, states have the flexibility to design their own approach in accordance with their needs and resources. Projects operate in elementary, middle, and high schools, and have used stand-alone curricula, while others have integrated character education into existing education programs.

States provide technical and professional assistance to local school districts in the development and implementation of curricular materials, teacher training, and other activities related to character education. In addition, each state is required to establish a clearinghouse to collect and disseminate information on model programs and materials to the participating districts and all other districts within the state. Local districts participating in the partnership have the responsibility to ensure that parents, students, and other members of the community are involved in the design and implementation of any program.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Require more program evaluation and dissemination of both project purpose and outcomes, so that results can be shared and applied to other efforts. Information regarding the effectiveness of all programs, projects, and activities supported by the FIE should be made readily available for others to adopt and adapt.

- Help programs become self-sustaining by allowing the Secretary to require non-federal matching funds. Experience shows that requiring recipients to commit their own resources through a matching requirement can help ensure that programs continue after federal funding expires.

- Increase flexibility in supporting promising character education. Current law prevents the Secretary of Education from making more than 10 grants per year for character education programs, and limits overall funding for each state to $1 million over a five-year period. The proposal would allow the provision of awards directly to school districts and states programs and remove the limit on the number of grants allowable each year. These changes would increase flexibility to support promising and innovative programs.

- Streamline requirements of character education programs. The proposal would remove the requirement for individual states to develop their own clearinghouses on character education. The proposal would instead establish a national clearinghouse to disseminate information on research, model programs, and materials to all states and districts. Finally, our proposal would increase the focus on development and implementation of character education programs without duplicative and unnecessary requirements.

TITLE X, PART B — GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the National Research Center's efforts to disseminate its information on gifted and talented education to schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education program was created under the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988. It provides national leadership for efforts to identify and serve gifted and talented students, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, or have disabilities.

The Javits Gifted and Talented program supports the expansion and improvement of educational opportunities for the nation's estimated 2.5 million gifted and talented children and youth, approximately half of whom receive no special services. Javits Gifted and Talented funds are provided to states, school districts, universities, and public and private organizations to train personnel, develop and expand gifted programs, and conduct research to help identify and teach gifted students.

The Javits Gifted and Talented program provides demonstration grants for preservice and continuing teacher education on how to work effectively with gifted children. It supports other activities, including model and exemplary programs, to build schools' capacity to meet the special needs of gifted and talented students. The National Research Center promotes innovative strategies for identifying and teaching gifted and talented children and encourages the development of challenging curricula for all students.

The Javits program is the only federal initiative that directly funds programs to improve the education of gifted and talented students. With $6.5 million in fiscal 1999, the federal government plays a small but critical role in providing funds to help teachers, support research, and initiate projects that reach out to children who have not been included in gifted and talented programs in the past (such as gifted children who are disadvantaged or have limited proficiency in English). The federal support for gifted and talented education helps improve educational quality and expand choices for students and schools.

What We've Learned

Javits projects have revealed positive developments in student achievement, student self-esteem, parental involvement, classroom practices, and the expanded identification of gifted disadvantaged students. An internal program evaluation of the Javits National Research Center reports that the center has had positive effects on research and practice in gifted education at the local, state, regional, and national levels. The Research Center has encouraged educators to identify all forms of talent, including but not limited to IQ, and thereby has reached more poor and minority students.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Continue the National Research Center's efforts to disseminate information on gifted and talented education to schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. The center's emphasis on low-income areas will continue to ensure that poor and minority students with leadership potential are exposed to development programs and services they might otherwise not receive.

TITLE X, PART C — INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues our commitment to civic and economic education worldwide by extending funding for international education.

The International Civic Education Exchange Program provides important training in the principles of a democratic and free society to emerging democracies in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. There are now programs linking 14 American states with 11 of these fragile democracies. Together, these programs reach more than 170,000 students and 8,000 teachers. Soon similar programs will be implemented in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as in fledgling democracies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

The International Economics Education Program brings together U.S educators and their counterparts in Eastern Europe and the newly independent nations of the former Soviet Union. This program helps reform educational systems and speed up the transition to a market economy, an essential process to strengthening democracy in these nations. Over 500 teachers from nine countries have participated in training workshops between 1995 and 1998. In 1998-99, over 375 educators from 18 countries participated in the "Training for Trainers" program and they, in turn, will teach an additional 4,500 teachers.

What We Propose

- Continue support for the International Civic and Economic Education Program, which provides international students with training in democratic and economic principles, and extend the program to additional fragile democracies.

TITLE X, PART D — ARTS IN EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the work of the Kennedy Center and the Very Special Arts program; and
- Encourages the creation of partnerships to serve at-risk students.

The Arts in Education program supports activities conducted by Very Special Arts (VSA) and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. VSA serves over 3.5 million people with disabilities each year. Last year, VSA developed a virtual gallery on the Internet, which shares the talents of artists with disabilities, and established the Electronics Arts Academies to help people explore careers in the technological arts field. Other new initiatives include Taking Notice, a photography program that documents the experience of living with a disability, and Arts for All, which provides specialized visual arts tools and materials for people with varying levels of independence.

The Kennedy Center's education program provides professional development for teachers on integrating the arts into the classroom. The education program also provides a national clearinghouse for arts education ideas and technology, performances for young people, and artist training in dance, music, and theater.

What We've Learned

Research has concluded that students benefit in many ways from participation in arts programs. Youth in arts programs are 31 percent more likely to say that they plan to continue education after high school than a national sample of students. They are eight times as likely to receive a community service award, four-and-a-half times as likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem, and three times as likely to participate in a science or math fair. They are also twice as likely to win an award for academic achievement.[1]

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Continue the work of the Kennedy Center and the Very Special Arts program and strengthen targeting to low-income areas by moving the authorization for model arts and cultural programs for at-risk children and youth to the authorization for the Kennedy Center and VSA programs. Our proposal would encourage partnerships between these two organizations and the model arts and cultural programs for at-risk children and youth.

TITLE X, PART E — INEXPENSIVE BOOK DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the focus of the book distribution program to high-poverty areas.

The Inexpensive Book Distribution program encourages children between the ages of 3 and 18 to read, including by distributing free books. The Department administers this program through a contract with Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), a national nonprofit organization.

RIF develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read. Through a national network of teachers, parents, and community volunteers, RIF programs bring books and other essential literacy resources to children, at no cost to them or their families. RIF focuses highest priority on the nation's neediest children from birth to age 11. With fiscal year 1998 funds, 2.3 million children received over 7 million books through Reading Is Fundamental. About 6 percent of these children had special needs.

RIF is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit children's literacy organization, with programs in every state. Through RIF's public-private partnership with the Department, more than 100 national foundations and corporations, and local organizations and businesses support the work of 240,000 educators, parents, and community volunteers who run the RIF program to provide community support and involvement in literacy projects. By the year 2000, RIF will have put 200 million books into the hands and homes of America's children.

What We've Learned

Some experts believe that for America's poorest children, the biggest obstacle to literacy is the scarcity of books and appropriate reading material. In many homes, particularly those without adult readers, there are simply not enough books. Studies show that parents who were given

books and "prescriptions for reading" by their children's pediatricians were four times as likely to read books with their young children as other parents. The mothers of children receiving welfare, who are at higher risk for illiteracy, were eight times as likely to read to their children when given books and encouragement.[2]

Access to reading materials should continue throughout a child's school years. The 1998 Nation's Report Card on Reading found that students with higher scores also reported that their homes included four types of reading materials: encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, and at least 25 books. Fourth- and eighth-grade students who lacked access to these materials at home had test scores 10 to 36 points lower than children who did have such access. The lack of books was the best predictor of below-average reading scores.[3]

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Continue the focus of book distribution to high-poverty areas to ensure that high-risk children have access to appropriate reading material.

TITLE X, PART F — CIVIC EDUCATION

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues our commitment to civic education by extending funding for civic education.

What We've Learned

In its 12-year history, the We The People Civic Education program has helped more than 26 million students in 24,000 elementary and secondary schools gain a working knowledge of the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the principles of democratic government. More than 82,000 teachers have participated in the program, and more than 89,000 sets of textbooks have been distributed free to schools throughout America.

What We Propose

- Continue support for We the People, which provides American students with an important foundation for citizenship.

TITLE X, PART G — 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Continues the popular 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which promotes extended learning opportunities for students; and
- Strengthens the program by offering technical amendments similar to those that were offered during the appropriations process last year to:
  - Build communities' capacity to operate after-school programs by adding a local matching requirement and by extending the grant period from three to five years;
  - Promote collaboration between schools and community organizations;
  - Allow up to 10 percent of the funds to be used for grants to community-based organizations with the concurrence of the school district;
  - Direct funding to communities with a substantial need for expanded learning; and
  - Emphasize expanded learning opportunities for children and community members after school, on weekends, and during the summer.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides grants to public schools to offer opportunities for extended learning time to students and community members. In three years' time, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has expanded from a $1 million demonstration program in fiscal year 1997 to a $200 million program that will serve about 400,000 children and over 200,000 adults this year.

The public response to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers has been overwhelming. In fiscal year 1998, the Department received applications from nearly 2,000 communities. In fiscal year 1999, the number of applicants surpassed 2,000; together they requested nearly $900 million in assistance.

What We've Learned

After-school programs provide opportunities for children to participate, alone or in small groups, with mentors and tutors in interesting academic activities and to have fun through cultural, artistic, and sports programs. When coordinated with challenging curricula and thoughtful instruction, extended learning time programs can improve student achievement.[4]

Giving children more time to learn in enriching after-school, weekend, and summer programs can help all students achieve to high standards and end both social promotion and grade retention.

Students in after-school programs show improved achievement in math, reading, and other subjects.[5] Successful Maryland schools saw consistent academic gains associated with extended-day programs.[6]

Research has also found that after-school programs keep children of all ages safe and out of trouble. Children are less likely to commit crimes or be victims of crime in communities with such programs.[7]

Finally, a recent survey of the American public showed exceptionally strong, bipartisan support for school-based after-school programs. Survey respondents stressed the value of tutoring and help with homework, access to modern technology, and opportunities to participate in community service programs, activities that are offered by nearly every 21st Century program.[8]

Another survey, conducted in December by the national PTA, found that two-thirds of parents of public school children wanted the federal government to increase funding for after-school opportunities.

In the fiscal year 1998 21st Century grant competition, the Secretary gave a competitive priority to applications targeting middle school students because so few middle school students are served by after-school programs. In the next competition, the Secretary plans to provide a competitive priority to applications targeting students in Title I schools identified as in need of "corrective action" — those schools that have been in school improvement for three or more years — because students at these schools have a great need and ability to benefit from after-school programs. Special efforts will be made to make sure that these schools are aware of the extensive technical assistance available to communities applying for these grants.

What We Propose

Our reauthorization proposal builds upon the strengths of the current program — including the use of school facilities to benefit the entire community and the requirement to establish strong collaborations with community organizations — while offering some revisions designed to better target resources and promote the sustainability of programs.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Require school districts to match grant funds while extending the grant period up to five years. Experience shows that providing core funding for five years while requiring local communities to commit their own resources, including with other federal resources, through a matching requirement can help ensure that programs remain in place after the grant expires. A matching requirement also will enable more children and adults to be served nationwide.

- Strengthen the requirement that schools and community organizations should collaborate by involving both parties in planning and implementing the project.

- Allow up to 10 percent of the funds in a given year to be awarded to community-based organizations. In some neighborhoods, community organizations may have facilities that are superior to or more centrally-located than the local public schools. In other areas, community organizations may wish to provide services within the schools, and the school district may prefer that such an organization serve as the grantee. To provide flexibility to communities in these situations, we propose to extend eligibility to receive 21st Century Community Center grants to community organizations with the concurrence of the local school district.

- Clarify the targeting to inner cities, rural areas, and small cities with a substantial need for expanded learning opportunities because of, for example, a high proportion of low-achieving students and lack of resources to establish or expand community learning centers.

- Emphasize the establishment or expansion of after-school, weekend, and summer programs that offer expanded learning opportunities in a safe, drug-free environment. The current statute requires grantees to provide a broad array of services that benefit the entire community. The Department believes that 21st Century programs should continue to serve the broad needs of their community, but we also believe that, first and foremost, programs must provide expanded learning opportunities to children.

TITLE X, PART H — HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Supports effective educational reforms in 5,000 American high schools by the year 2007 by helping high schools in urban and rural districts that educate students from low-income families help students by strengthening curriculum and instruction, improving Title I schoolwide programs, and providing enhanced professional development opportunities for school staff;
- Promote research-based, schoolwide reforms to challenge all students to meet high state standards, such as ensuring that students receive individualized attention and are motivated to learn;
- Promote safer, more supportive schools by encouraging smaller learning environments (such as schools within schools), involving members of the community, and creating partnerships with other institutions;
- Experiment with incentive awards for teachers and administrators who improve student achievement; and
- Encourage the adoption of successful high school reform strategies by recognizing high schools that show outstanding results, disseminating information on best practices, and creating networks of participating school districts to foster communication and collaboration.

Given their unique organizational roles as gateways to college and careers and their often large and anonymous environments, secondary schools merit special attention. Our reauthorization proposal would support the development and implementation of effective educational reforms in high schools, particularly those that educate concentrations of students from low-income families. It establishes the goal that at least 5,000 American high schools — half of all high schools — will have implemented comprehensive reforms by the year 2007.

What We've Learned

In the 21st century, high schools must help all students succeed in college and prepare themselves for careers in an economy that is increasingly dominated by global competition and constantly changing technology. To be effective, high schools must not only prepare students academically, they must support adolescents' personal and interpersonal growth during this critical time in their lives.

It is not at all clear that high schools are meeting the academic and developmental challenges of students. For example:

- Only 78 percent of all Americans between the ages of 25 and 29 have graduated from high school, although an additional 11 percent earned a general equivalency diploma. Almost half of the 78 percent of students who do graduate from high school are not able to complete college or climb a career ladder from an entry-level job.

- On an international assessment of math and science skills released in February 1998 — the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) — American twelfth-graders outperformed students from only 2 (Cyprus and South Africa) of the 21 other participating countries.

- Math and science scores of American 17-year-olds on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are on a long-term decline, despite recent gains. The average science score in 1996 was lower than the 1969 average, and the average math score in 1996 was not significantly different from the 1973 average.

- Recently released NAEP scores in reading among twelfth-graders indicate improvement among our higher-achieving students but not among the lowest-achieving students.

- High schools are increasingly larger places where students feel disconnected from adults, particularly in urban and suburban areas. Research shows that when students feel connected to school and to their parents, they are less likely than other adolescents to suffer from emotional distress, have suicidal thoughts and behaviors, use violence, and smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or smoke marijuana.

- The problems facing high schools are particularly prevalent in schools that enroll concentrations of minority students and students from low-income families. Because of changes made by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, high schools now receive significantly more Title I funding than was the case before. The number of high schools operating Title I schoolwide programs has increased. However, evaluations indicate that Title I, by itself, has not yet resulted in significant reforms in high schools.

- Relatively few high schools are undertaking serious standards-based reforms. For instance, most of the initiatives carried out through the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program have been at the elementary level.

High school reforms can be effective. For example, the Department's New American High Schools showcase sites demonstrated that standards-based, locally driven reform in high schools between 1995 and 1998 was associated with improvement in attendance and graduation rates. Schools that participate in the Southern Regional Education Board's "High Schools that Work" program — a whole-school, research-based reform initiative — have shown significant improvement in reading and mathematics scores.[9] The Johns Hopkins University Talent Development model has demonstrated promising results at its initial implementation site. And

since states began strengthening graduation requirements, more high school students are completing challenging math courses.

Highest Level of Mathematics Course Taken at Age 17		
Highest Course Completed	1990	1996
First-year algebra	15 %	12 %
Geometry	15	16
Second-year algebra	44	50

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1997, 1991). *Trends in Academic Progress.*

A variety of approaches to high school reform, geared to local needs and conditions, can make a difference. Since 1996, the Department's "New American High Schools" initiative has recognized high schools that fully prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing technological and global economy. In addition to meeting challenging academic standards, these public schools help students acquire the communications, problem-solving, computer. and technical skills necessary to pursue college and careers. Each of the schools also has developed effective partnerships with the community, parents, and postsecondary institutions, and has demonstrated sustained student academic performance over a five-year period.

Other approaches include "schools within schools" and innovations that create smaller learning environments and get adults more fully involved in the lives of students, "career academies" and other approaches that structure learning around career preparation, partnerships that pair schools with business or institutions of higher education, and reforms that reorganize the school day. Most successful reforms have a strong focus on the professional development of educators and the provision of in-depth academic, career, and college counseling.

What We Propose

The Education Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Support effective educational reforms in 5,000 American high schools by the year 2007. Our proposal would provide grants to school districts to help them improve high schools by (1) meeting the needs of students at risk of failing to master challenging academics through strengthened curricula, instruction, and extended learning opportunities; (2) improving Title I schoolwide programs; and (3) creating professional development opportunities for school staff to improve student achievement.

- Encourage the use of Title I funds so that federal, state, and local monies are collectively directed to high school reform.

- Promote research-based, schoolwide reforms, such as ensuring that students receive individual attention; challenging all students to meet high state standards; and motivating students to learn through, for example, applied learning.

- Promote safer, more supportive schools by encouraging smaller learning environments, involving members of the community, and creating partnerships with other institutions.

- Experiment with incentive awards for teachers and administrators who improve student achievement. Offering incentive awards to successful teachers and administrators could help raise student achievement. Under our proposal, the Department would select schools to participate in an experimental incentive program. Teachers and administrators at participating schools whose students showed improvement on multiple measures of student achievement would receive up to $3,000 each, which they could use for any purpose.

- Encourage the adoption of successful high school reform strategies by recognizing high schools that show outstanding results, disseminating information on best practices, and creating networks of participating school districts to foster communication and collaboration.

TITLE X, PART I — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Promotes the goal that all students will develop proficiency in more than one language;
- Emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of foreign language instruction in the early grades by expanding access to high-quality foreign language programs in elementary schools;
- Supports state leadership in improving foreign language instruction in all schools by supporting the development of standards and assessments, dissemination of information on promising local practices, and efforts to improve the supply of qualified foreign language teachers;
- Stimulates an increase in the number of elementary school foreign language teachers by supporting the recruitment and training of new teachers; and
- Encourages the development and use of new technology applications to bring foreign language instruction to students in creative and effective ways.

The Elementary School Foreign Language program responds to the growing demand for multilingualism created by growing diversity within the United States and increasing cultural exchange and economic interdependency worldwide. Research indicates that, although foreign language instruction is most effective when it begins in elementary school, fewer than one-fourth of public elementary schools in the United States teach a foreign language.

The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), currently authorized under Title VII-B, supports the instruction of a foreign language for all children. Our proposal would strengthen this program by supporting new and promising approaches to improving the quality of foreign language instruction and dramatically increasing access to them, particularly for elementary school students.

What We've Learned

Foreign language instruction in public elementary schools has grown over the past 10 years. The portion of public elementary schools offering a foreign language increased from 17 percent in 1987 to 24 percent in 1997. However, public schools still lag behind private elementary schools and international schools in offering such instruction.[10]

Percentage of Schools with Foreign Language Instruction		
	1987	1997
Public elementary schools	17 %	24 %
Private elementary schools	34	53

Elementary school foreign language programs are often "exploratory," characterized by developing only basic reading and writing skills and an appreciation for other cultures. Despite indications that such programs produce significantly fewer gains than programs directed at developing proficiency, roughly 45 percent of elementary language programs in 1997 were exploratory.[11]

With increasing numbers of elementary schools offering a foreign language, continuity with middle and secondary school programs has become an issue. Recent research indicates that only 10 percent of secondary schools take previous language achievement into account when assigning students to classes.

State leadership can help ensure the growth of high-quality foreign language programs. Currently, 35 states have policies or mandates for secondary school foreign language programs; six states—Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Montana, North Carolina, and Oklahoma—have foreign language mandates for their elementary schools. By 1998, 19 states had developed foreign language standards.

Technology is also beginning to expand opportunities for foreign language exposure and learning. While most of the current commercially developed foreign language software emphasizes grammar drills and practice, translations and modifications of popular math, language arts, and word processing software are being developed in foreign languages.[12] To meet the demand for instructional support, the emphasis in technology should be on the innovative uses of developing tools — including software, Web-based instruction, and digital television — that explore the necessary balance between exposure, guided practice, and interactive experiences to help students become fluent.

According to recent survey data, 40 percent of elementary schools would like to add a foreign language program. This interest signals a significant opportunity to create and expand high-quality elementary school foreign language programs.[13]

What We Propose

Our proposal establishes a national goal that 25 percent of all public elementary schools should offer high-quality, standards-based, foreign language programs by 2005, and that 50 percent should offer such programs by 2010. These programs would be tied to challenging standards and focused on developing student language proficiency, not simply exposing students to the

language or culture. Finally, our proposal would support transitions between elementary and secondary school foreign language programs.

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Support state capacity to expand and improve foreign language instruction at the elementary school level. Our proposal would support the development of foreign language standards and assessments, as well as the dissemination of information on promising practices and use of technology to improve instruction. Our proposal would also encourage states to work as partners with teacher preparation programs to expand the pool of elementary school foreign language teachers. States could, for example, work to develop or expand teacher education programs, support alternative routes to teacher certification, or stimulate recruitment of multilingual teachers into foreign language instruction in elementary schools.

- Continue support for local programs to create and improve elementary school foreign language programs. Over the past five years, FLAP has helped almost 60,000 public school students learn foreign languages. The program helps meet the growing need for professional development, innovative classroom materials, and curriculum development.

  Our proposed Elementary School Foreign Language initiative would continue to support these efforts, with an emphasis on increasing foreign language instruction in elementary school and improving transitions between middle and secondary school language programs. Efforts would emphasize developing fluency, rather than cultural exposure.

- Increase access to high-quality foreign language instruction through the use of advanced technology and telecommunications applications. Our proposal would stimulate the development of new applications, software, authoring and tutoring tools, and methods for delivering high-quality instruction by encouraging states and districts to explore new uses of educational technology in foreign language instruction.

TITLE X, PART J — NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Makes a more direct link between efforts to improve writing and growing efforts to improve reading.

The National Writing Project (NWP) works to improve student writing abilities and provide professional development programs for classroom teachers. NWP operates on a "teachers teaching teachers" model. Successful writing teachers conduct workshops for other teachers in the schools during the school year to help improve overall writing skills.

Knowing how to write — including learning to read — is central to succeeding in school and in the workplace, yet much remains to be done to improve the ability of America's children to write well. Writing scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were either stagnant or in decline between 1984 to 1996 for all three grades tested. The majority of America's colleges and universities conduct remedial writing courses.

What We've Learned

The National Writing Project provides a model for ongoing professional development that builds independent local programs. NWP is a network of 157 writing project sites in 46 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. In 1996-97, it generated $6.47 for every federal dollar and served 117,932 teachers and administrators. NWP's continued success stems from its principles that teachers are key to educational reform, effective literacy programs are inclusive, and writing deserves constant attention from kindergarten through the university level.

NWP began to receive federal support in 1990 and received a significant increase of $2 million in federal funding in FY 1999, for a total of $7 million. The Administration is proposing an additional $3 million in FY 2000 to link NWP efforts to improve writing to the increased efforts to improve literacy. With increased funding, NWP will add 20 more sites and double the capacity of existing sites to help classroom teachers improve their ability to improve writing.

What We Propose

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Make a more direct link between the efforts to improve writing and the growing efforts to improve reading. NWP has revealed that using similar strategies in teaching reading and writing helps children do better in both activities. By teaching children to use knowledge on topics, literature, and language systems, they are able to learn both literacy concepts and procedures.

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TITLE XI: GENERAL PROVISIONS, DEFINITIONS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

TITLE XI, PART A — GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Expands the authority of states and districts to consolidate administrative funds;
- Promotes continuing standards-based education reform by (1) encouraging the coordination of resources through the consolidated planning authority under which states and school districts may submit a single plan for ESEA and other formula grant programs and (2) ensuring that consolidated plans include the information needed to administer the programs they cover;
- Authorizes a consolidated state annual performance report to encourage the integration and coordination of resources, simplify reporting requirements, and hold states accountable for program performance;
- Clarifies that states must monitor school districts to ensure compliance with the requirements of ESEA programs;
- Expands the Secretary's authority to waive statutory requirements that obstruct reform;
- Authorizes the Secretary to develop performance indicators for ESEA programs, in consultation with states and consistent with the Results Act;
- Help states develop information management systems to improve the quality of data collected and use for program improvement and for reporting to the federal government under the Results Act;
- Promotes greater consultation among public and private school officials;
- Authorizes states to approve coordinated services applications under Title XI, rather than requiring these applications to be sent to the Secretary; and
- Updates the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 to conform to provisions of the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999.

Title XI contains general provisions that govern the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs to facilitate program implementation and administration. These provisions include definitions, fiscal requirements, consolidated planning and reporting requirements, and authority for the Secretary to grant waivers.

What We've Learned

The Improving America's Schools Act, which reauthorized the ESEA in 1994, expanded the flexibility of states, districts, and schools in administering the ESEA programs. States, districts, and schools are taking advantage of this flexibility.[1]

First, every state but one chose to submit a single, consolidated plan instead of separate plans for the majority of ESEA programs. In fiscal year 1996, administrative changes, including the consolidated plan, reduced paperwork requirements for states by more than 85 percent.[2]

Second, states, school districts, and schools are requesting waivers of statutory and regulatory requirements that hinder innovative education reform. As of September 1998, the U.S. Department of Education had received 630 waiver requests under the 1994 law from states, districts, and schools across the country. Roughly 85 percent of these waivers were either approved or withdrawn because applicants learned they had sufficient flexibility under the law to proceed without a waiver.[3]

The most popular waiver requests are for relief from the minimum poverty threshold to designate a schoolwide program under Title I and from the Title I targeting requirements (although the number of the latter waiver requests has declined steadily since 1994).[4]

Twelve states currently participate in the Ed-Flex Demonstration Program. A GAO study found that participating states varied in how frequently they used this authority, and in how effectively they monitored the effect of the waivers they provided.[5]

The Results Act of 1993 requires the Department of Education to provide annual performance indicators for each of its programs. However, the General Accounting Office and the Department of Education's Office of Inspector General have stressed the need for more accurate data from states.[6]

What We Propose

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 encouraged program coordination and increased local flexibility. The law now allows the consolidation of state and local administrative funds, the consolidation of program plans at the state and local levels, and waivers of statutory or regulatory requirements that might inhibit effective program operations.

To continue the successes of these reforms, the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 would:

- Maintain and expand the authority of states and school districts to consolidate administrative funds. To promote coordination among the ESEA programs, administrative funds under the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program and the Class-Size Reduction initiative would be added to the list of programs for which administrative funds may be consolidated. The proposal would also clarify that consolidated administrative funds may be used to carry out state activities under the Education Accountability Act, to implement the Cooperative Audit Resolution and Oversight Initiative, and to train personnel engaged in audit and monitoring.

- Update the recently enacted Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 which permits states to waive selected requirements of ESEA programs. In order to ensure that expanded flexibility is accompanied by strong accountability, states would be required to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act in ESEA, as well as the Title I requirements regarding content and performance standards, assessments, and accountability.

- Strengthen the consolidated planning authority under which states may submit a single, consolidated plan for the ESEA and other formula grant programs by clarifying that the consolidated plan should be used to promote continuing standards-based education reform and to encourage the integration and coordination of resources. The consolidated plans are reducing states' administrative burdens and encouraging collaboration among state education programs. However, according to an early evaluation, state administrators are just beginning to learn how to work together to maximize the consolidated plan's potential.[7]

  To further promote effective consolidated planning, the proposal would clarify that:
  - A key purpose of consolidated plans is to further standards-based reform and encourage the integration and coordination of ESEA resources within a state;
  - The plan must describe how funds are integrated with those of other specified programs;
  - States choosing to submit consolidated plans must comply with all legal requirements applicable to the programs covered by the consolidated plans;
  - A new consolidated plan must be submitted for the new reauthorization cycle; and
  - Both state and local consolidated plans must contain the information the Secretary needs to ensure the effective administration of programs included in the plan.

  The proposal would also authorize the Secretary to use a peer review process to assist in the review of consolidated plans and require plan amendments to reflect changes identified in the review process.

- Provide for a consolidated state annual performance report to encourage the integration and coordination of resources, simplify reporting requirements, and obtain annual data on program performance. To further promote program coordination and ease of administration, states would include all programs in an annual consolidated performance report, instead of making separate reports for each program. The report would provide information on program operation and progress toward meeting performance indicators that can be used at both the state and federal level to continually improve the programs.

- Clarify that states must monitor the performance of school districts to ensure compliance with the requirements of ESEA programs. As the recipient of ESEA formula grants, states are responsible for ensuring that programs are carried out in accordance with the law. However, a review of state and school district audits by the Department of Education's Office of the Inspector General raised questions about whether states are carrying out this responsibility.[8]

  The proposal would clarify that state educational agencies must monitor how school districts use ESEA funds. Monitoring would include proper documentation of oversight activities, technical assistance when necessary, and the examination of findings to identify trends and develop strategies for correcting problems.

- Expand the Secretary's waiver authority to include waivers of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 and Title VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Under current law, the Secretary does not have the authority to waive the requirements of the McKinney Act. Although the Secretary has the authority to waive provisions of the Perkins Act under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the School-To-Work Opportunities Act, both of these laws expire soon. Our proposal would enable the Secretary to grant waivers for these two programs using the ESEA waiver authority, the authority under which waivers are most often requested.

- Authorize the Secretary to develop indicators of program performance, in consultation with states and consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act. The Results Act requires the Department of Education to provide annual performance indicators of progress for each of its programs. However, only three ESEA programs — Title I, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, and the Eisenhower grant program — currently require states and districts to develop and report performance indicators to the federal government.

- Improve the quality of program data available at the federal, state, and local level. Our proposal would enable the Department of Education to help states develop information management systems. These systems would promote the integrity of the data to use for their own planning purposes and to report to the federal government under the Results Act. Our proposal also requires states to ensure that the data used to measure progress on program indicators are complete, reliable, and valid.

- Clarify the requirement for consultation among public and private school officials. Our proposal would clarify that the consultation must include meetings between school district and private school officials throughout the implementation and assessment of services. The meetings would take into account:
  - The amount of federal funds generated by low-income students who attend private schools; and
  - How and when the school district would decide the delivery of services to eligible students attending private schools.

- Authorize states to approve applications for Title XI coordinated services, rather than requiring these applications to be sent to the Secretary. If states choose not to review these

applications, school districts would be able to operate coordinated services projects without submitting an application.

Title XI permits school districts to apply to the Secretary to use up to 5 percent of their ESEA funds to develop, implement, or expand a coordinated services project. Coordinated services projects improve the access of elementary and secondary school students and their families to comprehensive social, health, and education services to help students succeed in school.

Two states now have waivers to approve coordinated services applications. Our proposal would extend this authority to all states, without requiring waivers.

TITLE XI, PART B — THE EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

What's New

The Education Accountability Act:

- Helps states and school districts turn around low-performing schools by encouraging states to develop a statewide accountability system to hold school districts and schools accountable for improved student performance;
- Holds states accountable for having student progress and promotion policy to ensure that students progress through school on a timely basis, master challenging state standards, and the practices of social promotion and traditional grade retention are ended;
- Helps ensure that classroom teachers are qualified and prepared to teach to high standards by requiring states to include, as part of its certification process for new teachers, an assessment of both subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills and by phasing out the use of teachers with emergency certificates and the practice of assigning teachers to teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation;
- Ensures that all schools have sound school discipline policies that are focused on prevention and foster safe and orderly environments for learning; and
- Helps ensure that parents in all states have access to the information they need to evaluate the quality of their schools by requiring annual state, district, and school report cards that are distributed to all parents and the public. The report cards would include information on student achievement, teacher professional qualifications, class size, school safety, and, where appropriate, the academic achievement of ethnic and racial subgroups, to ensure accountability for helping all students achieve to high standards.

The Education Accountability Act builds on the foundation and purpose of standards-based reform: to improve academic achievement and help all students reach high standards by incorporating challenging state content and student performance standards into teacher practice and by enhancing school and student accountability for performance.

What We've Learned

About school accountability:

There is evidence that accountability tied to consequences is a motivating force in improving student achievement. Texas and North Carolina — two states recently recognized by the National Education Goals Panel for the most significant gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as well as for progress on 33 indicators related to improving

education — are also considered by *Education Week* to have the two most comprehensive state accountability systems in the nation. A recent study by Rand researchers concludes that the most plausible explanation for test score gains is the states' aligned system of standards, curriculum, and assessments, in combination with the states' efforts to hold schools accountable for improvement of *all* students. The accountability systems in both Texas and North Carolina assign ratings to schools and identify low-performing schools, reward successful schools, provide assistance to low-performing schools, and sanction for persistently failing schools.[9]

Identifying Low-Performing Schools

Procedures and standards for identifying low-performing schools are central to the state and district accountability systems mandated by Title I. For example:

- The Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) established a baseline and academic goals for every Kentucky school through the year 2010. Schools that exceed the goals are eligible for financial awards. The lowest-performing schools, designated as "schools in crisis," are those where student performance declines by more than 5 percent of their baseline for two consecutive assessment cycles.

- San Francisco Unified School District uses nine performance indicators to identify low-performing schools, including the percentage of students who score below the 25th percentile on the district assessment; the numbers of suspensions, dropouts, and student absences in schools; the percentage of teachers who are long-term substitutes; and the number of students requesting open enrollment transfers out of certain schools.

Source: U.S. Department of Education. (May 1998). *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools.*

On social promotion and retention:

The problem of social promotion — the promotion of students from grade to grade when they are unprepared and have not yet met challenging academic standards — is a hidden but potentially large problem. Research indicates that 10 to 15 percent of 340,000 young adults who graduate from high school but have no further formal education cannot balance a checkbook or write a letter to a credit card company to complain about a bill.[10] Although most teachers agree that promoting students who are unprepared is a burden for teachers and classmates and lowers standards, over half of teachers surveyed in a recent poll indicate that, in the past year, unprepared students in their school have been promoted.[11]

Research evidence indicates that the most common alternative to social promotion — retention, or holding students back in grade — is often both ineffective and harmful. Studies of retention show that the achievement of retained students still lags behind that of their peers after repeating a grade. Retention in grade also greatly increases the likelihood that a student will drop out of school, and being held back twice makes dropping out a virtual certainty. Retention

is more than twice as prevalent among boys as among girls, and more than twice as prevalent among African-American students as among white students.[12]

Research indicates that neither social promotion nor retention improves failing students' chances for educational success. Low-achieving students continue to be low achievers after being promoted, but most retained students never catch up with their peers. Social promotion and retention often have other serious effects on students. The National Association of School Psychologists has reported that unprepared and retained children tend to have low self-esteem, get into trouble, and dislike school. Retention can be a particularly traumatic experience for children who view it as punishment and a highly stressful event.[13]

While a growing number of states and local school districts are implementing new promotion policies designed to end social promotion, greater attention must be paid to ways of helping educators and students avoid confronting two clearly unsound options: promoting or retaining and unqualified student. This requires a comprehensive approach that includes clear standards for performance, well-prepared teachers, early identification and intervention for students who need extra assistance, after-school and summer programs for students who are not making progress to meet the standards, and intensive intervention with appropriate instructional strategies for students who do not meet promotion standards on time.

Boston's Policy to End Social Promotion

- Beginning in summer 1999, summer school is available for students who have not met promotion requirements by the end of grades 2, 5, and 8.
- Students in grades 5 and 8 who have already been retained for one year and who do not meet promotion requirements to grades 6 and 9 must attend a special transition program to boost skills.
- Students can only have three unexcused absences per marking period or they will receive no credit, unless they pass the final exam for the course.
- Starting with the class of 2002, all students must take and pass advanced algebra.

On interventions for students at-risk of failing to meet standards:

Participation in high-quality learning environments that build on the regular school day, such as after-school extended learning programs, can improve children's academic and social development. Research has shown that students who participate in after-school programs exhibit higher achievement in reading, math, and other subjects compared with their own past performance and with the performance of comparable students who did not participate in such a program.[14]

Summer Bridge Program:
The Chicago Public Schools

Chicago has adopted a rigorous student promotion policy that requires underachieving students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 9 to complete a summer school program before being promoted to the next grade. Students who do not meet designated minimum scores on the district's standardized tests or who fail reading or math must successfully complete a six or seven week summer remediation program. All ninth-graders who miss more than 20 days of school or fail to earn the required core credits also are required to attend the summer-school programs. Students who fail the summer programs are held back and required to participate in the district's Lighthouse program, which provides students with academic assistance after school. Eighth-graders over the age of 15 who fail to reach grade level after the summer program are assigned to an alternative school.

On teacher quality:

Good teaching matters. A recent report released by the Education Trust presents research that substantiates the belief that teachers make a difference in student achievement and that the effects of good teachers on student performance are long-lived. Findings from studies in Tennessee, Dallas, and Boston reveal that, whatever their background or disadvantages, students taught by effective teachers achieved substantially larger gains than students taught by less effective teachers. For example, the average reading scores of a group of fourth-graders in Dallas assigned to three highly effective teachers rose from the 59th percentile to the 76th percentile by grade 6. A slightly higher achieving group taught by less effective teachers fell from the 60th percentile in grade 4 to the 42nd percentile in grade 6.[15]

Research also reveals a troubling picture of the state of our nation's teaching force. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, one of the most important factors in improving student achievement is the knowledge and skills that teachers bring to the classroom. Yet every year, approximately 50,000 individuals teach on "emergency" certificates, which means they do not meet the standards the state has set for certification. In addition, numerous teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation, with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers lacking even a minor in their main teaching field. Students

in schools with the highest concentrations of poverty — those who often need the most help from the best teachers — are most likely to be in classrooms with teachers who are not fully qualified. For example, in schools with the highest minority enrollment, students have a less than 50 percent chance of having a math or science teacher with a license and degree in the field.[16]

On discipline policies:

While recent data show a declining school crime rate, school disruption remains an important issue for educators. Between 1991 and 1997, significantly more school principals identified student tardiness, absenteeism, class cutting, drug use, sale of drugs on school grounds, and verbal abuse of teachers as serious or moderate problems in their schools. Surveys of the American public reveal that citizens are concerned about teaching children values and discipline, and keeping drugs away from schools.[17]

Effective Discipline Policies
Marshall Middle School, Texas

Marshall Middle School in Houston, Texas, turned its undisciplined environment around using a program called Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline, which seeks to improve instruction by building self-discipline among students. The idea is that as students become citizens of their schools, they begin to take responsibility for their actions and the actions of others. As the discipline referral and absenteeism rates at Marshall declined, student achievement and instructional time increased. By not having to respond to so many disciplinary problems, each teacher gained an average of 30 extra minutes a day — the equivalent of an extra 15 days of instruction per year. In 1995-96 Marshall Middle School was removed from district and state lists of low-performing schools.

Research suggests that discipline policies that protect students and staff from disruptive behavior, promote pride and respect, and hold students accountable without being oppressive or unfair can contribute to feelings of self-worth and high morale.[18] Safe, orderly classrooms mean fewer distractions for teachers and students so that more time can be spent on academic tasks.

On public reporting on school performance:

Thirty-six states now issue school-level report cards. Yet a recent *Education Week* report indicates that the information included in school report cards varies widely across states and districts. Most report cards do not clearly indicate the relationship between various indicators and achievement scores. The report also found that report cards are being used to a limited extent to rate low-performing schools, compare school performance to other schools in the state,

or inform parents and the public about school performance.[19] Another analysis of early school report cards indicates that they tend to include "input measures" that described the characteristics of schools, rather than measures of quality or performance.[20]

Research shows that report cards on state, district, and school performance may not be distributed widely enough. In focus groups held around the country, most parents and taxpayers said they had never seen a report card on individual public schools in their communities. Many school report cards do not include information that parents and the public say they need to evaluate schools.[21]

School Report Cards: What Do Parents Really Want to Know?

A recent study on school report cards by *Education Week* examined what parents, taxpayers, and educators say they need to know to make schools more accountable for results. Parents rated the following as the top 10:

- School safety
- Teacher qualifications
- Class sizes
- Graduation rates
- Dropout rates
- Statewide test scores
- Parent survey data
- SAT scores
- Percentage of students promoted to the next grade
- Attendance rates

What We Propose

The Education Accountability Act would:

- Help states and districts turn-around low-performing schools. Each state would be required to set aside 2.5 percent of its Title I allocation to strengthen state and local capacity to turn around low-performing schools. This set-aside would increase to 3.5 percent in the 2003-04 school year. At least 70 percent of these funds would go to districts to turn around low-performing schools. The remainder would be used to fund a state support system to improve schools and districts.

  This set-aside would provide more funds for swift, intensive intervention such as expert consultation and in-depth teacher training in schools and districts identified as being in need of improvement, and for stronger corrective actions in schools and districts that fail to show improvement after initial interventions.

  Funds would first be used in consistently low-performing schools and school districts to implement strong corrective actions that dramatically alter the structure of schools and the instructional strategies to help students in the school or school district. Districts would take at least one of the following corrective actions: (1) implementing a new curriculum that is research-based and offers substantial promise of improving student achievement; (2) redesigning or reconstituting the school, including reopening it as a charter school; or (3) closing the school and allowing its students to transfer. In all instances of corrective action, districts may also allow students the option of transferring to a new school.

Funds would then be used in low-performing schools or districts that have been identified as being in need of improvement where funds would be used to provide swift, intensive intervention such as expert consultation and in-depth teacher training.

- Assist all students in meeting challenging state standards. Our proposal would hold states and school districts accountable for helping all students progress through school and graduate having mastered the challenging material needed for them to meet high standards. States will be required to put policies in place that require school districts to (1) implement research-based prevention and early intervention strategies to identify and support students who might need additional help meeting challenging standards; (2) provide all students with learning opportunities in classrooms with qualified teachers who use proven instructional practices tied to challenging state standards; and, (3) provide continuing, intensive and comprehensive educational interventions to students who are not meeting standards on a timely basis.

- Develop first-rate student progress and promotion policies to end the practices of social promotion and grade retention. With educational supports in place to help students meet high standards, our proposal would require states to implement policies to end practices of social promotion and traditional grade retention within four years. States would hold school districts accountable for ensuring that all students meet challenging standards at key transition points or graduating from high school. States would define key transition points (e.g., fourth grade and eighth grade), but would be required to include high school graduation as one of the transition points. States would be held accountable for ensuring that assessments used for purposes of promotion are aligned with the state's standards; use multiple measures, including teacher evaluations; offer multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate that they can meet the standards; are valid and reliable for the purposes for which they are being used; and provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.

- Place qualified teachers in all classrooms by ending the practices of hiring emergency certified teachers and asking teachers to teach classes out of their subject expertise. Our proposal would help ensure that classroom teachers are qualified and prepared to teach to high standards by requiring states to include as part of its certification process for new teachers, an assessment of both subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills. In addition, it would phase out the use of teachers with emergency certificates and the practice of assigning teachers to subjects for which they lack adequate preparation.

  Our proposal would require states to ensure that, within four years, at least 95 percent of their teachers are (1) fully-certified, (2) working toward full certification through an alternative route, or (3) are fully-certified in another state and working toward meeting any state-specific requirements. In addition, states would be required to ensure that at least 95 percent of secondary school teachers have had academic training or demonstrated competence in the subject area in which they teach.

- Implement sound discipline policies to ensure a safe, orderly, and drug-free learning environment in every school. Our proposal would require states to hold school districts and schools accountable for discipline policies that focus on prevention, are consistent and fair, and were developed with the participation of the school community. States would also be required to ensure that schools have a plan to help students who are expelled or suspended continue to meet the challenging state standards.

- Promote public awareness and accountability through school, district, and state report cards. Our proposal would help ensure that parents in all states have access to the information they need to evaluate the quality of their schools by requiring state, district, and school-level annual report cards that go to parents and the public. The report cards would include information on student achievement, teacher professional qualifications, class size, school safety, and, where appropriate, the academic achievement of subgroups of students — including ethnic and racial subgroups, students with limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities — to ensure accountability for helping all students achieve to high academic standards. States, school districts, and schools would be required to have these policies in place within one year.

- Provide support for states to meet these requirements and implement sanctions for states that persistently fail. If a state does not meet the requirements under the Education Accountability Act, the Secretary of Education could provide assistance and require an alternative action plan. If states continue to fail to implement these accountability provisions, the Secretary would have the authority to take actions such as terminating the states' administrative flexibility or withholding administrative funds.

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STEWART B. McKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

What's New

The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999:

- Further integrates homeless students into the mainstream school environment;
- Increases homeless students' access to schools through designated homeless liaison personnel for school districts;
- Encourages high-quality approaches to meeting the needs of the homeless students by awarding competitive subgrants;
- Reduces the burden on states to collect data;
- Requires school districts to minimize disruptive school transfers for homeless students; and
- Strengthens parental rights and requires states to more broadly disseminate information about those rights.

Since 1987, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program — authorized by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act — has helped homeless children receive the same public education as other children. The law requires states and school districts to revise any practices or policies that might obstruct homeless students' opportunity to succeed in school.

The Department distributes funds to states on a formula basis under the McKinney Act. States award subgrants to school districts to carry out the purposes of the program. School districts have considerable flexibility in the use of subgrant funds.

What We've Learned

The McKinney program has played a major role in removing barriers to the enrollment and attendance in school of homeless children and youth. For example:

- The Department's 1995 evaluation concluded that almost all states have revised their laws, regulations, and policies to improve access to education for homeless students.[1] Twenty-seven states changed residency laws or regulations. Almost all state coordinators report either that all students can enroll without school records or that they have made special

allowances to expedite their records transfer. Thirty-five states eliminated the barriers of immunization and guardianship requirements.

- States continue to review and update their policies in response to the changing needs of homeless students. A more recent evaluation shows that only six states say that immunization requirements still pose a barrier to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.[2] However, 13 states say that requirements for legal guardianship still pose a barrier to the enrollment of homeless children and youth. Most states made changes in policy or legislation to remove transportation as a barrier to enrollment, although 18 states say that transportation still poses a barrier to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.

Homeless children and youth still face challenges in gaining access to high-quality educational services. Maximizing stability is the single most important factor in ensuring the success of homeless children and youth in school. In a recent survey of Homeless State Coordinators, frequent mobility was the most commonly cited "most significant current barrier." Homeless children move an average of three times per year and are between 50 and 100 percent more likely to repeat a grade than other students.[3] Moreover, each time a child changes schools, he or she may lose four to six months of academic and developmental time.

The Cleveland, Ohio, school district is making it easier for homeless students to enroll in school. Staff from homeless shelters can now call a 24-hour, automated helpline to enroll students, while the Cleveland school system requests any missing information from other districts' records. Homeless workers say that the new process gets students into the classroom much faster: Students can generally attend school the day after the call is placed.

State homeless coordinators report that one of the most successful provisions of the law is the requirement that McKinney subgrantees appoint a liaison person for the homeless.[4] According to state coordinators and their local counterparts, homeless liaison personnel have played a key role in linking local organizations, church and civic groups, clinics, and traditional homeless providers, including shelters and food banks. In many states, the homeless liaison personnel help establish relations between schools and shelters to facilitate the enrollment process and sort out the educational needs of the students. Thirty-seven percent of school districts nationwide already have a designated liaison personnel for homeless students, although only 3 percent of school districts nationwide receive McKinney funds.[5]

Because of inherent problems in accurately determining the numbers of homeless children, states have submitted information to the Secretary that is largely unreliable. The current effort to estimate the numbers of children and youth in homeless situations is riddled with difficulties: survey methodologies and definitions vary from state to state and the cost of conducting an actual count is prohibitive for many states.

Increasingly, separate transitional schools are being established to provide educational services to students who have been temporarily displaced from regular educational programs because of homelessness.[6] Preliminary research shows at least 20 separate transitional schools are now operating in locations from a one-room schoolhouse located in a shelter to a stand-alone building that is comparable to a typical public school building.[7] These schools offer homeless children and youth intensive and individualized care for varying amounts of time, after which they are mainstreamed into regular school.

However, some view these segregated schools as inherently isolating and stigmatizing. These special schools may also lack accountability to the public school system and therefore may not provide the same educational opportunities.

What We Propose

Our proposal would result in greater school stability, less isolation and stigmatization of homeless students, stronger parental rights and broader dissemination of information about these rights, and visible models of successful school practices. Our reauthorization proposal would:

- Promote the integration of homeless children by prohibiting states that receive McKinney funds from segregating homeless students in separate schools.

- Ensure that homeless children are identified and served by requiring all districts to designate a "homeless liaison" responsible for ensuring that homeless children are regularly attending school and are receiving equitable access to high-quality education and support services. The liaison can be a federal programs coordinator, Title I coordinator, or other program staff.

- Improve the quality of programs by making subgrants competitive. States would award competitive subgrants to school districts based on need and quality of the proposal.

- Improve the quality of data and reduce the data collection burden on states. Rather than continuing to require states to fulfill current data collection requirements, which have not resulted in nationally consistent data, our proposal would instead require the Department of Education — in coordination with the other federal agencies administering programs under the McKinney Act — to periodically gather information on the number and location of homeless children and youth, the services they receive, and the extent to which their needs are being met.

- Improve the stability and performance of homeless children and youth in school. Our proposal would reduce school transfers for homeless students by requiring school districts to maintain homeless children in their school of origin to the greatest extent feasible. Our proposal would also give parents the right to request that their children change schools if they believe the move is in the interest of the child.

- Improve dissemination of information about the rights of homeless children and their families. Our proposal would require school districts to post public notices regarding the educational rights of homeless children and youth in family shelters, soup kitchens, health

clinics, and elsewhere. The proposal would also require states to work with homeless parent groups to meet the needs of homeless students.

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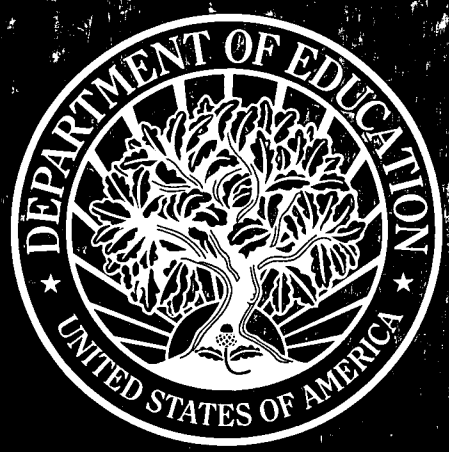
While opinions sometimes differed, there was a common interest in how we, as a nation, could best work toward the principles of academic equity and excellence. Nearly everyone agreed on the importance of strengthening the quality of our teaching force, which became a major theme of our proposal.

To everyone who contributed directly to this effort and to thousands more who work each day in our public schools to help our children learn, thank you.



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